

# DN disabilitynow

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## Dope demand

Disabled people want an immediate end to the government's ban on using cannabis to ease their pain, a new *DN* survey has found.

The survey comes close on the heels of the announcement by Home Secretary David Blunkett that he is to relax drugs laws and reclassify cannabis as a class C drug. This means that people will not be arrested for using it, although using it will still be a crime. But the change will not happen before July 2003.

Now, *DN* is to ask for a meeting with Mr Blunkett to plead with him for an immediate relaxation of the law to allow disabled people to either get cannabis from their doctors or have immunity from prosecution.

The government has said that cannabis-based medicines currently being tested will only be available through doctors if

approved by the Medicines Control Agency. This may not happen before 2004.

Out of 85 disabled people who responded to the *DN* survey, 62 took cannabis and 82 said the drug should be legalised immediately.

The editor of *DN*, Mary Wilkinson, said: "Our survey clearly shows that disabled people are being forced to break the law to ease their pain. They need cannabis now. The law must be changed."

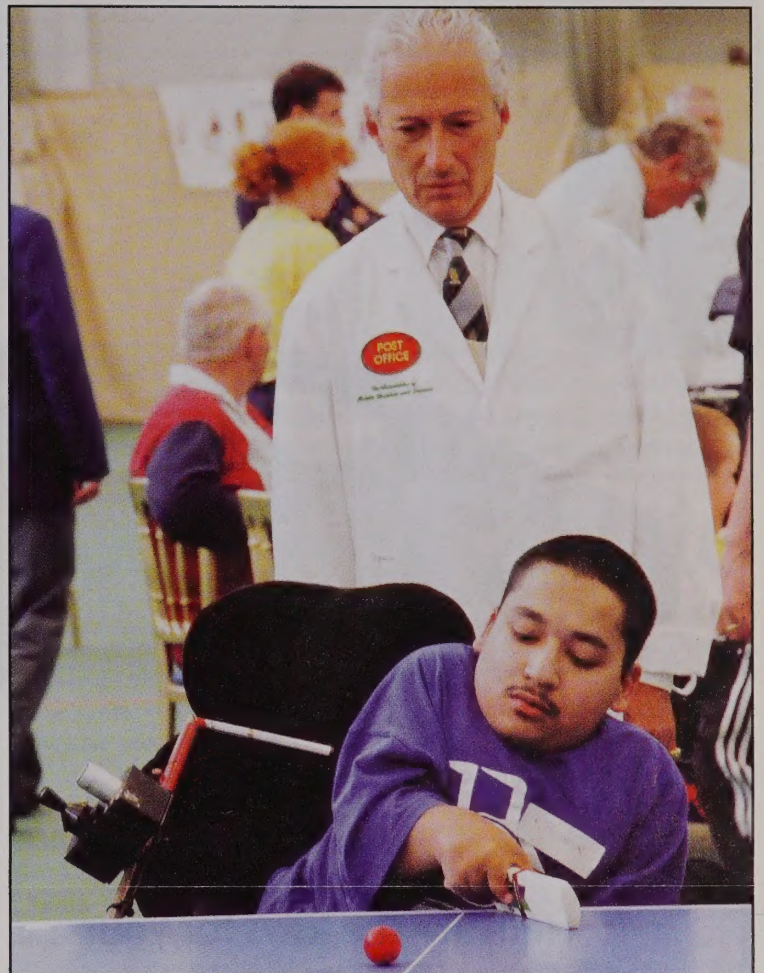
While 29 people said they got their cannabis from friends or family, 18 had to risk going directly to dealers. And although 28 said it was easy to get the drug, 16 found it difficult. Only 22 said the quality of the drug they got was good,

with 15 saying it was poor and 25 saying it varied. And 34 people said their doctors knew or approved of it.

Lily Sturgeon, who has spinal muscular atrophy, said: "I'm 55. I'm a great granny. I don't like the under-handedness and the fact that it is against the law. I feel guilty about that every time, but I still feel I have to do it if I want any quality of life. I've tried so many painkillers over the years, and they are useless."

Without a reliable supply from a doctor, she faces problems.

"Some stuff is just awful. You feel that you have wasted your money." She can spend £150 of her benefits on an ounce which lasts three months.



Level playing field: Amir Ali took part in a table cricket competition for disabled youngsters, organised by The Lord's Taverners. Amir captained the team from Wilson Stuart School, Birmingham, who triumphed over nine other regional finalists to claim the trophy.

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## Niven livid

The head of the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has launched a bitter attack on the government after learning second hand that it had apparently backtracked on plans to implement further civil rights for disabled people.

Bob Niven, chief executive of the DRC, told *DN* that senior civil servants within the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had led the DRC to believe that new laws would be in the November Queen's speech.

He said: "There were attempts to get disability legislation and the impression was given that they were going to succeed."

There are rumours that Niven first heard that the legislation would not be forthcoming from Julie Mellor, chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission, which covers sex discrimination.

This means that major areas

of transport, a public sector duty to promote disability equality and an extension of the definition of disability, will remain outside the law, Niven said.

The government pledged in 2000 that it would take action in these areas and it has made repeated commitments to implementing full civil rights.

Niven said: "This is a bitter disappointment and we cannot see any prospect of this primary legislation for the foreseeable future."

Kate Nash, director of the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation, hoped the arrival of Andrew Smith as Secretary of State at the DWP would help, but said: "Radar remains deeply concerned at the lack of a clear game-plan."

A government spokesperson, said: "The government is committed to delivering enforceable civil rights for disabled people. We are leading the way in Europe in this field."

## Reach out

The charity Sense is calling for people to back its campaign to help deafblind children and young people who are excluded from leisure services.

Pictured on *DN*'s cover are Linsey Truss (right), who is deafblind, and Lucy Drescher, from Sense, who took a trip on the London Eye to highlight the Reach Out campaign.

To sign up, visit the website: [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk) or phone Sense on tel: 020 7272 7774 for a campaign pack.

## In brief

### It's true: people care

Over half of Britain's adults will provide at least 20 hours of care a week at some stage in their lives, according to a new study.

Research from the University of York, published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, also found that "almost everyone" will be involved in caring for someone during their lives.



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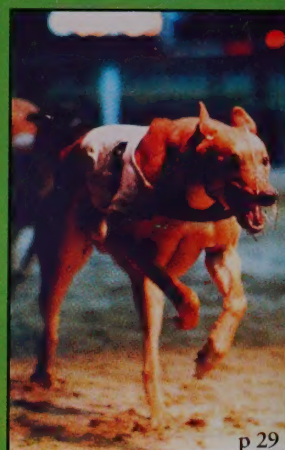
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**25,399**

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# Employment drop

The number of disabled people employed by the Civil Service has plunged by 2,000 in just three years, according to new government statistics.

The proportion of disabled employees fell from 4.1 to 3.7 per cent, yet the Cabinet Office report revealed that the number of women and people from ethnic minorities increased in the same three years, 1998 to 2001.

Ethnic minority staff rose by about 36,000, from 5.7 per cent to 7.2 per cent.

The government's failure is underlined by last summer's

Labour Force Survey, which found that 19 per cent of working age people are disabled.

The Cabinet Office report also showed only 1.8 per cent of senior staff described themselves as disabled.

But graduate recruits taken on through the Fast Stream scheme rose from just 8 out of 426 in 2000 to 12 of 421 entrants in 2001.

A Cabinet Office spokesman was unable to explain why the number of disabled people had fallen.

Ruth Scott, acting cam-

paigns manager for Scope, said she was "surprised" and "disappointed" at the figures.

She said: "The Civil Service needs to be as proactive in aiming recruitment initiatives at disabled people as they are at women and people from ethnic minorities."

Phil Madelin, disabilities officer for the Public and Commercial Services Union, said: "If the Civil Service is serious about recruiting and retaining disabled staff, then it is positive action and not words that are needed."

# Spending oversight

The government has ignored the needs of disabled people in its £300 billion spending review, charities have claimed.

Leonard Cheshire said the review of public spending for the three years from 2003/04 to 2005/06 failed to provide the necessary funds for residential and support services.

And a spokesman for the learning disability charity Mencap said the six per cent budget increase for social services announced in April's budget was "in danger of being

swallowed up by services for children or older people".

The Department for Work and Pensions confirmed it will roll out its Jobcentre Plus programme across the country over the next four years, thanks to its review settlement.

The scheme has been criticised for forcing people on incapacity benefits to attend job-focussed interviews every three years.

The Disability Rights Commission learned that its budget will rise by 14

per cent by 2005/2006.

And the disability organisation Scope said the launch of a consultation paper into "e-voting", given the go-ahead as part of the review, could lead to more accessible methods of voting.

The government also announced that in return for an annual six per cent increase in social services spending, the Department of Health will have to meet targets for cutting deaths from suicide, heart disease and cancer and for helping more older people live at home.



Doll face: Sam Sheppard, aged four, makes a new friend at The National Deaf Children's Society's annual exhibition in Telford. It is the largest exhibition for deaf children in Europe.

# Suicide no vote

Doctors have narrowly voted to oppose a change in the law to allow assisted suicide.

Doctors at the annual representative meeting of the British Medical Association (BMA) voted 96 to 82 against a motion which called on the BMA's Medical Ethics Committee to review whether the 1961 Suicide Act should be amended. Doctors were divided in a debate on the issue, the *British Medical Journal* reported.

The vote came about in particular as a response to the case

of Diane Pretty, who died in May from Motor Neurone Disease, having failed to convince the European Court of Human Rights that her husband should be immune from prosecution if he helped her to die.

The motion called on the committee to examine whether any amendments should be made "to take account of competent individuals who wish to take their own lives but are physically incapable of doing so."

See also profile on page 16

Is dashing through the snow on skis your idea of a n-ice time? DN wants to hear your experiences – good, bad or amusing – of life on the slopes for our October issue. Send them to the address on page 2 by 24 August, or e-mail: [editor@disabilitynow.org.uk](mailto:editor@disabilitynow.org.uk)

## In brief

### Asians excluded

Asian disabled people are often expected to just "fit in" with existing services because providers lack knowledge about their culture, according to a new study.

A researcher from the University of Northumbria questioned 28 Asian disabled people from the north of England for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation report.

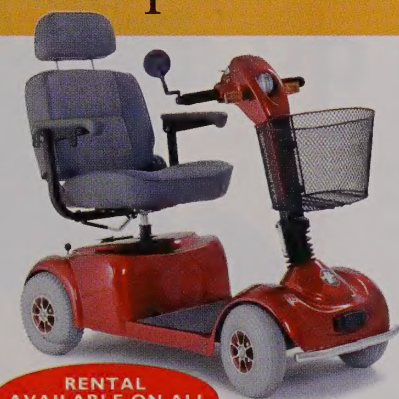
Some of those questioned believed they had been discriminated against, not only by service providers, but also by those in their own community.

### DLA rates up

The number of people claiming Disability Living Allowance has increased by more than five per cent to 2.32 million.

The Department for Work and Pensions' survey for the year to February 2002 found that arthritis or mental health problems accounted for 43 per cent of the causes of disability.

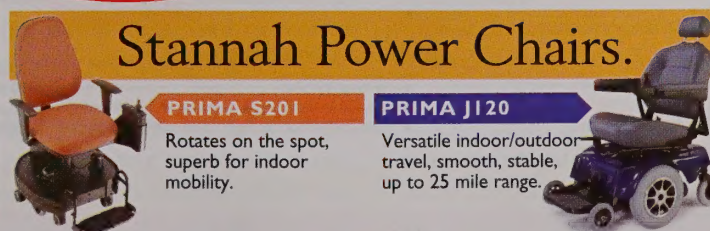
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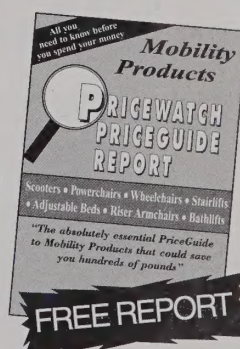
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# Parking probe



Nearly a quarter of disabled parking bays in a survey of supermarkets were being used by people without disabled badges.

Baywatch parking campaign volunteers, who carried out the survey, also found no vacant disabled bays in nearly 40 per cent of the stores.

They carried out spot checks on 276 Asda, Safeway, Sainsbury's and Tesco stores on Saturday, 29 June, as part of the campaign to clamp down on

abuse of disabled parking spaces.

But when told a bay was being misused, the response of staff in nearly 70 per cent of the stores was described as either excellent, good or fair.

Mary Wilkinson, editor of *DN*, a Baywatch member, said: "It seems there have been some improvements, but there shouldn't be any abuse at all."

"Every time the bays are full, a disabled person is effectively being banned from shopping."

The supermarkets welcomed the survey. Asda said the figures were "not ideal" and it was

aiming for 100 per cent compliance. Safeway was "concerned" by the figures, but wanted to analyse them in more detail. Sainsbury's was "encouraged" by some of the results, and Tesco said there were "some disappointing results", but it was seeking clarification of some of the figures.

At a "positive" meeting with Department of Transport officials in June, Baywatch members agreed to produce a pilot project to test ways of cutting abuse of supermarket parking bays, which could be put to ministers for approval.

# Airline errors fuel new campaign

A disabled businessman who has had his wheelchair repeatedly damaged during air travel is calling on *DN* readers to back a campaign to force airlines to address the problem.

Phil Friend decided to launch his campaign, backed by *DN*, after his wheelchair was badly damaged on a British Airways flight from Heathrow to Edinburgh last month.

Friend, director of disability training consultants Churchill and Friend, said it was the fourth time in the last three years his wheelchair has been damaged during a flight. Three were damaged on BA flights.

He said: "I was extremely angry when I got off that plane to find something so important to me had been treated in such a cavalier manner."

A British Airways (BA)

spokesman said they will consider a claim for damages. He said BA believed the problem was "relatively small", with only six claims so far this year for damaged wheelchairs. The airline is examining how it can address the problem.

But Friend's concerns about airlines were mirrored by nine times Paralympic gold medalist Tanni Grey-Thompson.

She said her wheelchairs are damaged or lost an average of 60 or 70 per cent of the time that she flies.

She said: "It is more of a surprise when it comes off and everything is OK."

*\*If your wheelchair has been damaged or lost by an airline, contact DN, tel: 020 76197323, e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk or visit www.disabilitynow.org.uk for a survey form.*



Access all areas: (From left to right) Laura Marshall, James Chilton, Angela Kerry, Tim Coulson-Davis and Sara Layton toast "72 Club", a new canal boat designed for holidays for disabled people, based on the River Lee in Hertfordshire, and part-funded by Queen Elizabeth's Foundation.

# Figures come up uneven

Public administration and defence bodies face the largest number of employment cases under disability rights laws, a government report has found.

The in-house report\* for the Department for Work and Pensions found that 20.9 per cent of employment cases lodged under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) were against such employers,

yet they employed only 7.7 per cent of disabled workers.

The report looked at all 8,908 DDA cases lodged with tribunals between December 1996 and September 2000.

It also found that while 39.1 per cent of those alleging they had diabetes were successful, only 18 per cent of those alleging depression, bad nerves or anxiety were successful.

Nick O'Brien, director of legal services at the Disability Rights Commission, said this might be because of difficulties in proving disability.

He was also concerned that until February 2001, only 53 cases had been issued under the goods and services provisions of the DDA.

\* [www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/IH91.pdf](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/IH91.pdf)

## In brief

### Techno text

Deaf and hearing impaired Londoners are to benefit from a project using state of the art communications technology run by the Royal National Institute for Deaf People.

The £450,000 project, funded by the Bridge House Trust,

will provide Speedtext, where an operator types up summaries at meetings which are read from a computer and a Video Interpreting Service which allows remote sign-language interpreting services through video phones.

### Taking applications

Disability groups have been asked to apply for grants of up

to £50,000 to run projects promoting inclusion for disabled people as part of the European Year of Disabled People in 2003.

Ten of these grants will be awarded, along with 80 more of up to £10,000 for local projects. The grants are funded by the government and the European Commission. Deadline: 27 Sept. [www.disability.gov.uk](http://www.disability.gov.uk) tel: 020 79628707

# Motability price hike

National car charity Motability is to take larger contributions from disabled people to meet the cost of adapting their vehicles.

Motability makes grants to allow disabled people to have larger, adapted or wheelchair accessible vehicles provided through the scheme.

Now it will increase the customer contribution from £300 to £500, back to the 1997 level.

The charity handed out £8.8m in 2001 helping 4,000 disabled people. This year has seen an increase in demand for grants which are partly funded by the government and partly by a charity fund.

Douglas Campbell, executive director of the Disabled Drivers' Association, said: "The government should put more money into the scheme."

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# Compulsion protest

Mental health groups are promising mass protests after accusing the government of refusing to listen to their concerns in the new Mental Health Bill.

The increased use of compulsion, which campaigners fear will result from the bill, could hit black people hardest, new evidence suggests.

The Mental Health Alliance, (MHA) is to hold a march of 5,000 people from the centre of London to Downing Street on 14 September.

It is also calling on individuals to respond to the consultation on the draft bill.

Campaigners say the bill will increase the number of people having forced treatment in community settings.

Paul Corry, an MHA spokesman, said: "People don't need more compulsion. What they actually need is some rights to access care and treatment."

A further protest is being organised at the Department of Health in Whitehall on 12 August by Critical Mental Health (CMH).

Meanwhile, a report\* by the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, says that services for black people are in crisis with prejudice on the part of service

providers and fear of service on the part of black people sometimes causing a downward spiral leading to compulsory treatment.

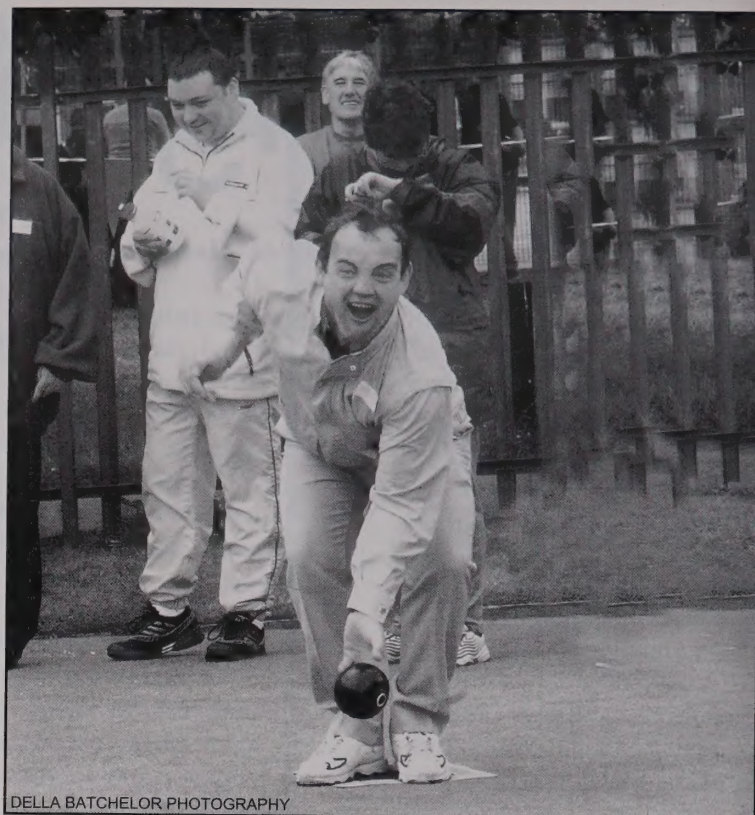
SCMH director Matt Muijen said that fear of more compulsion could be very damaging.

Rufus May at CMH, tel: 01274 322444.

Paul Corry at MHA, tel: 020 73309110, [www.mind.org.uk/take\\_action/mha.asp](http://www.mind.org.uk/take_action/mha.asp)

The consultation period ends on 16 September. For the paper, tel: 0845 7023474, [www.doh.gov.uk/mentalhealth](http://www.doh.gov.uk/mentalhealth)

\**Breaking the Circles of Fear*, £15, tel: 020 78278352.



DELLA BATCHELOR PHOTOGRAPHY

Bowled away: Stephen Bradley was one of nearly 100 people with learning disabilities who took part in a sports festival in Manchester to celebrate the city's hosting of the Commonwealth Games.



## The Bottom Line

A blind German psychic has said he can tell people's futures by reading lines on their naked bottoms.

The 39-year-old clairvoyant uses the lines on clients' bums just like other fortune-tellers read people's palms.

He says he can tell clients about their future financial success, happiness, health and family life.

But he says even an amateur can gain lots of information from the revealing rumps. For instance, a muscular bottom can suggest that someone is creative and self-confident.

He adds that many types of people have come to him, including a stockbroker and an actress.

## DN takes a stand



Disability Now has made a submission to the influential Commons Trade

and Industry Select Committee calling for winter fuel payments to be extended to severely disabled people of working age.

All pensioner households currently get the £200 payments, yet a DN survey has shown many disabled people cannot afford to keep warm.

The committee is carrying out an enquiry into fuel poverty.

DN estimates that it would cost £340m a year to extend the payments to 1.7 million people on Disability Living Allowance, middle or higher rate care component, or higher rate mobility component.

But DN editor, Mary Wilkinson is pressing for immediate government action, and has also sent the submission to Work and Pensions Secretary Andrew Smith.

She said: "We hope Mr Smith will act before disabled people face another freezing winter."

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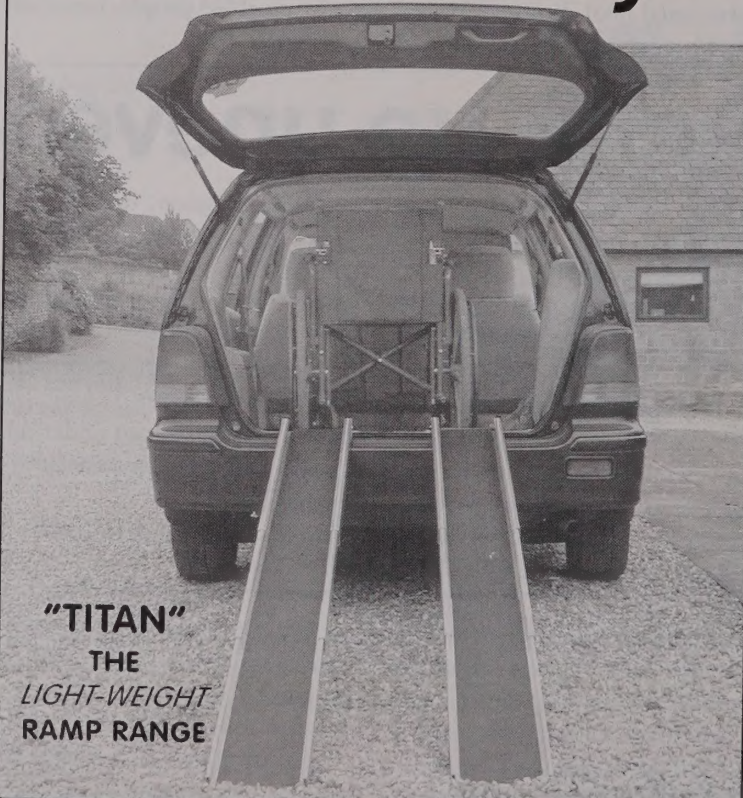


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## In brief

### DRC codes published

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has published two codes of practice aimed at helping schools, colleges and universities comply with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, which comes into force in September.

The DRC has also produced guides to the act aimed at school heads, governors and special educational needs coordinators. DRC, tel: 08457 622633, text: 08457 622644, [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)

### Calling young talent

Young artists have the chance to design the UK's official postcard for next year's European Year of People with Disabilities.

Youngsters from 10 to 15 years old can enter the competition\* to create a design for each European Union country.

Winners will attend a ceremony in Brussels this December to mark the European Day of Disabled People.

\* [www.eddp.org](http://www.eddp.org)



# Think twice, NICE

A government medicines watchdog is ignoring the social advantages of prescribing certain drugs, a committee of MPs has said.

The Health Select Committee said the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) should realise that some drugs reduced patients' and carers' dependency on benefits and improved their ability to find work.

The Multiple Sclerosis Society welcomed the report and said it had argued for NICE to take account of such factors during its lengthy appraisal of multiple sclerosis drugs.

NICE decides whether treat-

ments should be funded by the NHS and was intended to stop "postcode prescribing".

But the committee's report also called on the government to monitor how NICE's guidance was implemented by the NHS, and clarify how it should be paid for.

Neil Betteridge, of Arthritis Care, said: "There really is no point in NICE making recommendations if no one is charged with the responsibility for monitoring their impact."

NICE said many of the recommendations reflected suggestions from its own evidence. It will make a fuller response at its board meeting next month.

# A firm let-down

A company that carried out disability access audits for supermarket chain Sainsbury's discriminated against one of its own disabled members of staff, a tribunal has decided.

Aims Group, based near Towcester, Northamptonshire, was told to pay nearly £10,000 in compensation to Sonjha Kellock, a former disability access auditor.

The tribunal heard that Aims knew Mrs Kellock, who has an artificial leg, was unable to stand or walk for long periods and used painkillers for

"stump pain". But she often worked more than 50 hours a week to keep up with a punishing workload of visits to Sainsbury's supermarkets across the country.

Mrs Kellock, who represented herself, told DN: "I was being discriminated against by a group of people who supposedly work on behalf of disabled people, but when it came to my own needs they really didn't give a monkey's."

Aims Group dismissed her in July 2001 because it claimed she was "unsuitable"

for the job, the tribunal heard.

The tribunal found that Mrs Kellock did not like to discuss her disability with her employer because she was insecure about her job.

But it concluded that Aims "wholly overlooked" the opportunity to take expert advice on the implications of her disability.

Aims managing director Graham Brown said after the tribunal: "There are things that we could have done, but equally well there are things that she could have done."

# Sorry is just not enough

A young disability activist is angry that the government has failed to arrange accessible venues for national meetings it asks her to attend.

Therese Hunt, aged 12, who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair, is a member of the government's children and young people's advisory forum.

She has complained before about problems at forum events, including a residential weekend last November.

The problems were highlighted again last month when an event aimed at encouraging young people to participate in democracy was moved at short notice to an inaccessible venue.

Therese said: "They keep apologising, but sorry is not enough."

She was only able to attend because her sister volunteered to carry her up a flight of stairs at the cinema in London.

The government also booked an inaccessible restaurant.

Therese was again "really embarrassed" at having to be carried up and down stairs, and ended up eating in a separate part of the restaurant.

The government's children and young people's unit said they were "extremely sorry" and were determined to address the issues, with help from the Council for Disabled Children.



Classic fun: Vintage car owners took part in a drive to raise money for the charity Whizz-Kidz in June as part of Freemasonry in the Community Week. Drivers were sponsored by masons and non-masons.

## In brief

### Scot free

Older people in Scotland no longer have to pay for personal or nursing care, following the implementation of a new health policy.

Over 75,000 older people are expected to benefit from the change in the law brought in by the Scottish Parliament, at an estimated cost of £250m a year.

### What sport?

Only 51 per cent of disabled people had taken part in any sport, including walking, in the month before they were asked about it, a survey\* has found.

The survey of 6,500 disabled adults carried out for Sport England by researchers from the Office for National Statistics said far more information needed to be made available to disabled people about what sports they could do.

\* The Adult Disability Survey, tel: 0870 521 0255, website: [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)

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# Law demand

Severely disabled people will remain vulnerable to exploitation because of delays in reforming the law to help carers make decisions on their behalf, campaigners have said.

Charities say people with severe learning disabilities, mental health problems and dementia are at risk because carers have no legal authority to make day-to-day decisions on health or finance for them.

Mencap, representing an alliance of charities, has joined the Law Society and the British Medical Association to call for legislation.

David Congdon, Mencap's director of public affairs, said:

"Cases of financial mismanagement and controversial decisions about the treatment of people with learning disabilities highlight this as an area in need of urgent reform."

The Law Commission has produced reports, and even a draft bill, aimed at plugging the gap, but the government has yet to produce legislation.

The Lord Chancellor's department said the government would legislate "as soon as parliamentary time allows".

• The new Mental Health Bill includes safeguards for severely disabled people in mental health hospitals who cannot make their wishes known.



Flag day: Pat Wight, an employee at Remploy Leven in Fife, shows off an official Commonwealth Games flag made by the factory.

## He gave ill people 'a voice'

Vicky Cowell writes: Andrew Blake, founder and director of Seriously Ill for Medical Research (SIMR), died in hospital, aged 39, on 24 May.

Andrew had battled for most of his life with Friedrich's ataxia, a progressive neurological disorder. He was born into a farming family in 1963 and grew up with a great love of animals. In 1991, he formed SIMR, a UK patients' advocacy group which promotes humane use of animals and ethical use of biotechnology in medical

research. At the time, there was no pro-research group where seriously ill people had a voice.

Andrew's relentless campaigning on behalf of seriously ill patients was to have been officially recognised – he was to have been made an MBE in the recent Queen's birthday honours list.

SIMR will continue Andrew's legacy.



## MS needs not met

Nearly 70 per cent of people with multiple sclerosis do not have a social worker, a survey has found.

The report, based on over 1,000 questionnaires, said people with the condition can benefit from having such a key worker or care manager. It also highlighted the fact that 59 per cent of people with multiple sclerosis (MS) are likely to use a wheelchair at some time.

*Square Pegs, Round Holes\** by the MS Society also said care and benefits services failed those with fluctuating conditions.

MS Society chief executive Mike O'Donovan said: "Often this means changing care needs are not being met or appropriate benefits given."

Among those with relapsing remitting MS, 61 per cent felt their social care provider performed poorly in reassessing their needs when their condition changed. And only 41 per cent of them said Disability Living Allowance took adequate account of the fluctuating nature of the condition.

\*Free, tel: 020 8438 0700, [www.mssociety.org.uk](http://www.mssociety.org.uk)

## News review

DN rounds up news covered in the mainstream media over the last few weeks

### Vanishing vaccine

Pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) announced it had stopped production of its single rubella vaccine.

The move was a setback for parents concerned about the possible link between the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) triple vaccine and autism and bowel disease. Some prefer to give their children single vaccines.

GSK said there were only enough single rubella vaccines left to fulfil a contract to supply the Department of Health until 2004, for use in vaccinating women of child-bearing age.

### Home woman dies

A woman of 108 died after going on hunger strike in protest at the closure of the home where she had lived for seven years.

The owners of the home in Norwich blamed the closure on the cost of complying with new national minimum care standards. But the National Care Standards Commission, responsible for policing the standards, said the owners had made the decision before the commission was launched in April.

### HRT – 'no alarm'

A US study of the use of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) was halted after five years because of evidence it increased risk of heart disease, breast cancer and stroke. But the UK's Committee on Safety of Medicines said there was "no cause for alarm". Some cancers actually decreased in women on HRT, it said.

### The waiting game

The number of people waiting for hospital treatment in England rose by 9,200 to 1,055,000 in May. But the government said the number waiting more than a year fell by 400 to 20,800.

And Health Minister John Hutton said that, for the first time, no one was waiting more than 12 months for heart surgery.



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## In brief

### Winning waves

The radio station 96 Trent FM has won the 2002 Scope Action on Disability award.

The station won the award for the second time for its Carline service, which includes a helpline and programmes on social issues.

The annual award is part of the ntl Commercial Radio Awards, and seeks out the best commercial radio programme that includes and makes a difference to disabled people.

### Good work!

Centrica and Lloyds TSB have been made joint winners of a new Realising Ability Award in recognition of their efforts towards disability equality.

The award was part of the annual Business in the Community Awards. It is sponsored by UnumProvident in association with the Employers' Forum on Disability.

Both companies were praised for their efforts in recruiting and retaining disabled staff.



# UK wins gold

Britain's deaf swimming squad battled their way to 21 medals at the European Championships in Amsterdam, despite a continuing struggle for funding.

Highlights were Sarah McCrea's two golds in the 50m and 100m backstroke.

Just as impressive was Lulu Cummings, who beat Russian Deaflympic silver medallist, Ekaterina Savchenko, to win gold in the 200m butterfly.

And Niall Nesbitt, in his first international meeting, took third in the 1500m freestyle.

In all, the 14-strong team bagged four golds, nine silvers and eight bronze medals.

Vincent Dickson, the team's director of swimming, said: "We did very well, but other countries are catching us up, due to

our lack of funds for the coach and me to organise training."

The team was part-funded by the British Deaf Sports Council, but each swimmer still had to raise £400.

Last year, Britain's top deaf swimmers were told they would no longer qualify for the same National Lottery funding and coaching facilities as other elite disabled athletes.

Malcolm Green, who missed out on a bronze in the 50m freestyle by 0.4 seconds, said: "I think I could have got a medal if I had been able to dedicate myself to training."

Talented deaf female swimmers should contact Vincent Dickson on 020 8661 7146 (fax/minicom) or at [vincent.dickson2@virgin.net](mailto:vincent.dickson2@virgin.net)

# Bowling blitz

Britain's visually impaired ten-pin bowling team returned from the first world championships in Finland with three medals.

The eight-strong team's preparations were disrupted when one bowler, Derek Bishop, was re-categorised by officials from B2 to the less visually impaired B3 section.

It meant that the two women and six men squad had to reorganise some of their teams.

But, despite competing against less visually-impaired bowlers, Bishop, from

Gloucester, still won gold in the handicap B3 section.

Team manager Sandra Morgan said Bishop had been "devastated" at his reclassification. She added: "I think he deserved to win it with the disappointment he suffered."

Pauline Daniels, from Portsmouth, won bronze in the women's handicap B1, and Jill Dixon, from Basingstoke, took silver in the women's scratch B2.

*British Blind Sport, tel: 01926 424247*



Ace!: Peter Willcox took the men's doubles with Daniel Tunstall, but missed out in the men's singles.

# Schofield cleans up

Northern Ireland's Anthony Sinclair won his second men's singles title at the National Deaf Tennis Championships, in a repeat of last year's final.

Sinclair beat the second seed and his opponent in last year's final, Peter Willcox, from Devon, 6-3 6-4.

The women's singles also followed the form book, with Helen Schofield, from Yorkshire, easing to her eighth national

title, defeating Lincolnshire's Catherine Graham 6-1 6-2.

Schofield went on to take the women's doubles, in partnership with Cheshire's Sharon Templeman, and the mixed doubles, with Daniel Tunstall, from Scotland.

In the men's doubles, Tunstall partnered Willcox to take his second title of the championships in Cardiff.

A deaf tennis festival took

place alongside the event, with professional coaching for more than 30 children between the ages of five and 14.

This year's Wimbledon championships featured a demonstration of wheelchair men's doubles where British number one Jayant Mistry and his Dutch partner Robin Ammerlaan were narrowly beaten by Germany's Kai Schrameyer and Steve Welch of the United States.

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# MS trial takes off

Researchers are launching a trial to test whether the early use of an experimental drug can reduce long-term disability caused by multiple sclerosis.

Scientists are recruiting 180 volunteers with "early aggressive" relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis (MS) to take part in the five-year trial of the antibody Campath-1H.

The antibody has already shown it can achieve a dramatic

reduction in relapse rate for some people with an advanced form of the condition known as secondary progressive MS.

But the researchers, from the University of Cambridge and Addenbrooke's Hospital, hope it might also stop the build-up of damage that leads from relapsing-remitting MS to this more serious form of the condition, if people are treated early enough.

One-third of the volunteers

will receive the MS drug beta interferon, to compare its effectiveness with its "competitor".

Alasdair Coles, one of the researchers, said it would take about seven years before the final results were available.

He said: "What we all want to know is: can any treatment reduce disability in the long term?"

For information, contact the MS Trust, tel: 01462 476700.



The eyes have it: Baroness Betty Boothroyd, former Speaker of the House of Commons, helped launch The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association's One Vision campaign in June, aimed at encouraging people who use computers at work to test their eyes more frequently.

## Hip technique hope

Younger people with arthritis could enjoy a more active life, after government advisers recommended use of a hip resurfacing technique.

The charity Arthritis Care (AC) welcomed the guidance by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued to the NHS in June.

It recommends the "selective" use of metal on metal (MOM) hip resurfacing, which involves replacing surfaces in damaged hip joints with metal.

Less bone is removed than with a conventional artificial

hip joint and it allows the patient to remain more active.

NICE recommended that surgeons should consider MOM for younger, more active people who are likely to outlive a conventional artificial hip joint.

But it warned that there is little evidence for the long-term effectiveness of the technique and called for a national joint registry to monitor effectiveness.

And Emily Butler, AC policy and campaigns manager, warned of a shortage of surgeons trained in the technique.

## Light relief

Sleeping with a light on could help people with diabetes avoid a condition which can leave them visually impaired, according to researchers.

Diabetic retinopathy is the main cause of blindness in people of working age in the UK.

Researchers from Cardiff University, writing in *The Lancet*, said the condition might be caused by a lack of oxygen to the inner layers of the retina during darkness.

They said their study of patients with type 2 diabetes suggested night-time lighting might reduce the need for oxygen and prevent damage.

## Cut the mental health wait

A mental health charity has called on the government to slash the treatment delays that prevent many people from recovering from severe mental illness.

Rethink, formerly the National Schizophrenia Fellowship, says the longer people remain untreated, the harder it is for them to recover.


Its *Reaching People Early* report\* found people showing clear signs of psychosis wait an

average of 18 months before getting help.

And one in three people with severe mental illness are turned away when seeking help.

Cliff Prior, Rethink chief executive, said: "Today we are setting everyone from GPs to the government their first Rethink challenge – cut that 18-month wait and give people the best possible chance to make the fullest possible recovery."

\* [www.nsf.org.uk](http://www.nsf.org.uk)

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# Beacon blow

Nearly 50 disabled people will lose their jobs if the planned closure of a supported employment factory goes ahead.

Beacon Industries, part of the Beacon Centre for the Blind charity, is losing more than £300,000 a year.

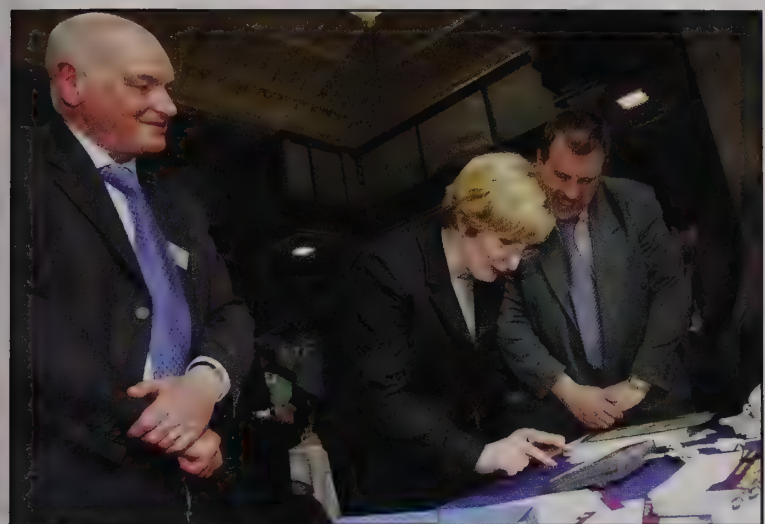
It employs 45 disabled people, most of whom are blind and partially sighted, although some have physical or learning disabilities. The factory provides assembly work, packaging and engineering goods and services to companies such as B & Q and Transco.

The charity has gathered a petition of 11,000 names calling

for government help, due to be delivered to Maria Eagle, Minister for Disabled People, as DN went to press. Five local MPs were also due to visit the factory to discuss rescue plans.

Jeremy Newell, production technician at the Wolverhampton site, who has worked at Beacon for 24 years, said: "We have been around for 125 years. We really do believe it is worth persevering and saving. We are not dead yet, but we have got to get things moving pretty quickly."

*\*Anyone who can help should contact chief executive Arthur Sidley, tel: 01902 880111.*



Let your fingers do the talking: Scotland's Minister for Social Justice Margaret Curran tried out a new textphone in June. BT Scotland has donated one to every member of the Scottish Parliament.

## Ken's capital plan

London's Mayor is to set a target for the amount of new housing that is wheelchair accessible.

In a draft version of his London Plan, Ken Livingstone said one in ten new homes should be accessible or easily adaptable for residents who use wheelchairs.

The plan also calls for road scheme proposals to improve conditions for disabled people.

Livingstone said he expects his plan to shape the capital over the next 10 to 15 years.

It has now been published

for consultation\* until 30 September.

Radar London Access Forum is part of a steering group producing guidance to sit alongside the plan. The group will look at issues such as planning, housing and parking.

Alun Francis, forum co-ordinator, said he was "quite positive" about the plan but added: "I hope there is thought behind it and it is not just words in print."

The forum was due to meet as DN went to press.

*\*www.london.gov.uk*

## In brief

### Welsh lead the way

A disability charity has praised the Welsh Assembly for deciding to launch an arthritis care strategy for Wales.

The strategy will set standards for treatment and rehabilitation and address the shortage of specialist staff.

A spokesman for the charity Arthritis Care called for similar action throughout the UK.

### Scots think again

The Scottish Executive has agreed to reconsider plans to allow some people with severe mental illness to undergo a controversial brain surgery technique without their consent.

The Scottish Association for Mental Health welcomed the decision. The charity said it would "vigorously oppose" any attempt to re-introduce the regulations for "neurosurgery for mental disorder", which involves destroying brain tissue about the size of a pea.

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# Partners in prime?

The Enabling Partnership seems to be taking more and more charities under its wing. Is that good news or bad for the disability world, asks John Pring

**R**ADAR, Enham, Shopmobility, Holiday Care, the National Information Forum...

At first sight, it is difficult to see what these organisations have in common, apart from the fact that they are all disability charities.

But there is another link. All five have either decided to position themselves under the new and rapidly expanding umbrella of the Enabling Partnership (EP), or are hoping to step under it over the next few months.

The EP's three current members are a mixed bag: RADAR, a campaigns and advice charity; the traditional service provider Enham; and the National Federation of Shopmobility UK, which runs schemes lending wheelchairs and powered scooters to disabled people.

The National Information Forum, Holiday Care and at least three others are negotiating possible entry with EP, which is surely set to become one of the biggest players, or at least one of the most recognisable names, in disability.

It hopes, eventually, to expand to about 20 members.

But some concerns have been raised: Enham is the money behind EP, but will its roots as a traditional service provider in the fields of employment, accommodation, care and training create a culture clash with its new partners? Is EP swallowing minnows with cash problems merely to satisfy a ravenous appetite? And does EP lack a clear strategic vision for its expansion?

The birth of EP can be traced back to the serious financial problems suffered by RADAR in 2000.

RADAR's chief executive at the time, Peter Mansell, sent out a letter to his member organisations, asking for help.

Enham, which had recently come into several million pounds through a property deal, came to the rescue.

And out of their negotiations came a new concept: a partnership of leading, but relatively small, disability charities, each a market leader in its own field.

The benefits to members are

clear. Loans can be made available using some of Enham's new resources. A central pool of EP communications, financial and human resources expertise is on tap. Trustees from members join the EP board and vice versa.

And EP members are not asked to pay for these services or repay their loans until they achieve financial stability.

Peter Mansell, chief executive of RADAR at the time of the merger, says: "The fact that RADAR is blossoming... means to me that the merger seems to have worked."

"I think it has great benefits. Less money on administration and more money on direct services and issues that are positive to disabled people."

Meanwhile, the expansion goes on. EP and the disability website Youreable are bidding to take over the wheelchair and scooter arm of Motability through a new, independent charity which would join EP.

EP itself only has a chief executive, two directors, one secretary, one communications



manager and a couple of consultants.

It is, says its chief executive, Michael Smith (*above*), a lean organisation, an umbrella, a parent, but definitely not an empire-builder.

The concept, he says, is that EP provides core services such as public relations, fund-raising and finance, leaving its members to act "as autonomously as they ever have done before".

One claim that has been made, though, is that EP has no apparent long-term strategy.

Alice Maynard, a disabled equality professional involved with several charities, believes this is a problem.

She says: "How do you judge whether you have a strategic fit as a charity with an organisation that doesn't have a strategic vision?"

But Smith says there is a strategy. He hopes to bring about 20 charities into the EP fold over the next few years.

"With 20 organisations, we could cover most of the fields



Growing concern: training at Enham, a member of EP

we wanted to and we could become expert in most of the important directions."

He says he only wants market leaders and adds: "The EP wants organisations who can show a defined need within the disability world for what they do. We do not want to take over the world; we just want to represent what people want. The EP is there to enable the other charities to fulfil their objectives."

And what about Enham's "dodgy" past as a service provider?

As Maynard says: "It takes a long time for organisations to change and Enham has in the past had a fairly traditional medical model culture."

Rachel Hurst, chair of Rights Now, goes even further. She is very critical of Enham's residential "villages" for disabled people.

"It's the whole premise of exclusionary service provision. If you build a village, it becomes exclusive. You're actually building a ghetto. I think it's terrifying."

She insists that many disability charities "would rather go bankrupt than join with someone like Enham".

But Smith insists Enham is "desperately trying to change". He was originally Enham's chief executive and joined it "on a programme of change".

He admits Enham used to be "a dumping ground" but says the process of cultural change is slow and a bit like turning round a supertanker.

"I totally admit it was bad, but we know that," he says. "We know we were wrong and

we are trying to change."

Ann Darnbrough, director of the National Information Forum, which is in discussions about joining EP, thinks it is a model that should be copied elsewhere. "Some of us are very small and we are struggling all the time. Core funding is a horrific problem for all of us."

She adds: "You do not lose your identity by working with somebody else."

Neil Betteridge, now head of public policy and campaigning

at Arthritis Care, but formerly with RADAR, agrees. "There is no evidence of Enham imposing an agenda on the work of RADAR. I see RADAR speaking out for disabled people as strongly as it has ever done."

Kate Nash (*below*), current director of RADAR, says EP has given RADAR the chance to achieve long-term stability, while remaining dedicated to lobbying and campaigning.

She admits that she had concerns about Enham's past history. So she visited its base in the Hampshire village of



Enham Alamein and "looked them in the whites of their eyes" to ensure they really were intent on giving disabled people a greater say in their organisation. She was satisfied with what she found.

"EP was always meant to be a virtual concept, to allow disability organisations to be everything they can be."

So far, she says, it has not disappointed.

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Live life to the full! David Barnsley tries out the compact, drive-from-wheelchair Suzuki Life



Press gang: DN staff get a chance to chat face to face with readers

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# The show

It may have been windy, but this year's Mobility Roadshow had lots going for it, says *DN* motoring correspondent Douglas Campbell

**T**hey told us we would get wet and cold at this year's Mobility Roadshow. Admittedly, the wind was a bit chilly, but we hardly had any rain over the whole three days, so Donington Park was kind to us.

The first thing to greet every visitor was clear signposting to set-down areas. All parking for disabled people was on hard surfaces, and shuttle services were available to ferry visitors quickly from the more distant parts of the car parks.

One of the first ports of call for many visitors was the

well known to *DN* readers as an active participant in the Baywatch campaign.

The campaign is working to get a better deal for disabled people when they need to park their cars. It is the joint campaign of *DN*, the British Polio Fellowship, the Disabled Drivers' Association and the Disabled Drivers' Motor Club.

Now to the exhibitors themselves. Reselco had a range of vehicles on their stand. They were promoting their Easyway finance package that offers an alternative to the Motability scheme. They were one of the

**'GPSP does notices you can tuck under the windscreen wipers of those ignorant motorists that park in our spaces without a badge'**

toilets. This year the Mobility Roadshow had two of their very own mobile toilets, designed to meet the needs of wheelchair users and other disabled people. These are operated by the Convenience Company on behalf of the show organisers and were a big improvement on older designs.

Keep Able were busily lending wheelchairs and scooters to visitors. Despite being rushed off their feet, they made time to ensure each visitor was comfortable and familiar with the controls.

The main marquee was an amazing sight. A temporary structure of no less than 40 metres by 130 metres housed all the indoor stands. Among the exhibitors was supermarket giant ASDA, which was telling visitors about how it helps disabled customers. ASDA is

few at the Mobility Roadshow to be publicising the ability of wheelchair users to buy cars with adaptations free of VAT, reducing the price of the car by around 15 per cent. Tel: 020 8569 6363, [www.reselco.com](http://www.reselco.com)

The Highways Agency was showing the new emergency roadside telephones that are soon to be tested on the M25 and M11 in the Chigwell area. These are designed to be easier to use, with an option of a text display and a choice of languages. I was easily able to try the telephone on the stand, but still feel sure that the best advice is to use a mobile phone from the car rather than risk the dangers of the hard shoulder. I also found the text display too high. Tel: 08457 50 40 30, [www.highways.gov.uk](http://www.highways.gov.uk)

Steering Developments was showing the latest Chair Topper roof-top automatic stowage for folded wheelchairs from Braun of Norway. Competitively priced compared with equivalent products, this version is also weather tight and requires less headroom. Around £3,000, tel: 01442 212918, [www.steeringdevelopments.co.uk](http://www.steeringdevelopments.co.uk)

Batricar was showing the newly launched Serene model. Looking like the Batricar we have all grown to know, the new model incorporates lots of small improvements based on experience and user comments. With cabin £5,725, tel: 01460 67220, e-mail: [batricarindmob@aol.com](mailto:batricarindmob@aol.com)



High rise: trying out the Independence 3000 IBOT



Uplifting: Braun's Mette Greve shows off the Chair Topper

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# that was packed with go

Gerald Simonds launched the ultra-lightweight range of rigid and folding frame wheelchairs from US firm TiLite. It uses aerospace-grade titanium tubing and each wheelchair is built to match the precise requirements of the individual user. Weighing as little as 15lbs, the chairs are designed to be short, narrow and highly manoeuvrable. From £1,795, tel: 0800 220975, website: [www.gerald-simonds.co.uk](http://www.gerald-simonds.co.uk)

Independence Technology was demonstrating the Independence 3000 IBOT. This amazing device is a powered wheelchair that can climb stairs, go over rough ground and rise up on two wheels to let the user reach high shelves – or even paint the ceiling. It is only a prototype and is not yet commercially available. Tel: 01344 864000, website: [www.independence-now-europe.com/ibot](http://www.independence-now-europe.com/ibot)

There was little to excite me from the motor manufacturers. Vauxhall was showing its new Vectra, and Peugeot was attracting a lot of attention with the ever-popular 206 and the new baby estate 206SW. Ford had the new Fiesta on show, but there is still no date for the automatic version. Vauxhall, tel: 0800 731 5267, [www.vauxhall.co.uk](http://www.vauxhall.co.uk); Peugeot, tel: 0845 200 1234, [www.peugeot.co.uk/motability](http://www.peugeot.co.uk/motability); Ford, tel: 0800 240241, [www.fordmagic.co.uk](http://www.fordmagic.co.uk)

Jubilee Automotive Group was showing its range of vehicles, including the drive-from-wheelchair Suzuki Life, based on the Suzuki Wagon R. This was launched at the 2001 Mobility Roadshow, but after receiving much interest Jubilee

decided to make improvements before the first deliveries. Many visitors tried this amazingly compact and practical car out on the test track. It is certain that the order books will be full for many months as there is no other vehicle that can meet the needs of some disabled drivers at this price level. Tel: 0121 502 2252, [www.jubileeaauto.co.uk](http://www.jubileeaauto.co.uk)

TGA Electric Leisure was showing the new Buzz, a cross between a powered wheelchair and a scooter. The unique control system uses a handle on each side to control the speed and direction. £995, tel: 01787 478430, [www.tga-electric.com](http://www.tga-electric.com)

GPSP was showing its usual range of really useful little bits and pieces. I personally use their fluorescent yellow help sign to attract assistance in those petrol stations that do not have Service Call and their door window sticker asking people not to park too close as I need to open the door fully. They also do notices you can tuck under the windscreen wipers of those ignorant motorists that park in our spaces without a badge. Tel: 01275 842322.

What really did surprise me was the number of major players who were not at the show. Citroen is a major supplier of cars under the Motability scheme, but it was not in attendance. The RAC, which supplies breakdown and other services to 400,000 Motability customers, was also noticeable by its absence. Even the AA was only present in the form of its Patrol of the Year, with his vehicle in the outside display area.

Let's hope they're all there next year.



Right on track: visitors get to try the cars out on the famous Donington Park circuit

MARTIN JENKINSON



All sorts: (l to r) Douglas checks out the Buzz; the new Serene; visitors Jemima and Madelaine Gosling



Light stuff: Gerald Simonds' Nesad Causevic lifts a TiLite chair

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# Life goes on

Phil Such played sports and worked as a journalist for the *Daily Mail*. But earlier this year he tried to starve himself to death as motor neurone disease took hold. Rod Hermeston meets him

**L**umbering up the stairs to Phil Such's top-floor flat, I am puzzled given what I know of him.

How on earth does he climb these stairs?

Phil, 37, sits with his feet up, in shorts and trainers in his living room, while his partner Sheryn puts a glass and straw to his mouth. He talks to me, articulating his words individually and weakly.

He has a special chair to climb those stairs.

It is a far cry from just a few years ago when he was an active sportsman.

Phil only got his diagnosis of motor neurone disease (MND) in October 2000.

to allow voluntary euthanasia. He wrote to Tony Blair because he wants Britain to fall in line with Holland, where mercy killing is legal, and with Belgium, where it is about to be legalised (DN July).

Could it happen in Britain? Well, a number of MPs have expressed an interest in putting forward a private member's bill on euthanasia. An All Party Parliamentary Group for Compassion in Dying was also set up in May. It wants the issue to be debated in parliament and highlights research showing that 90 per cent of people support a change in the law.

The group is determined to carry forward the debate

he helped her to commit suicide. Phil backed her 100 per cent. The court rejected her case and she died in the same month after developing breathing difficulties.

Originally from Glasgow, Phil started work as a subeditor on newspapers at the age of 18.

Most recently, he worked on the *Daily Mail*, where he wrote up rugby matches as well.

In 1997 he had to watch his mother die from MND and he recalls with horror the choking problems she experienced in her last months.

"It was one of the most traumatic things in my life," he says.

His own diagnosis came in October 2000.

His overall way of dealing with it was to have a good time. He travelled with Sheryn, 52, who he met a year ago when she became his nurse. Within a month they were together.

They have visited Egypt, Barcelona, Monte Carlo and Ireland.

"Sheryn is unbelievable fun. We hit it off because of her



Home is where the heart is: Phil Such with his partner Sheryn

wicked sense of humour. I had never met anybody who was quite so caring and wonderful, but so devilish," he says.

With the help of the *Daily Mail*, Phil also went on a British Lions rugby tour of Australia.

But by January this year, he had gone "downhill" dramatically.

In February, he began a hunger strike, taking only fruit juices. He wanted his protest at the UK's ban on voluntary euthanasia to be very public.

People with MND can face a harrowing death, he says.

"In the latter stages when they have breathing problems, no doctor will guarantee them a comfortable, easy end. The only way that can be guaranteed is by a lethal injection."

The Motor Neurone Disease Association says uncomfortable deaths are rare.

Gayle Sweet, a spokesperson for the association, says: "In the vast majority of cases, people with MND die a peaceful death. Choking is extremely rare, and with the proper palliative care, need never happen."

But putting that aside, Phil still supports euthanasia.

"What I object to is not just the lack of control of your death. It is actually the humiliation of living with a condition that basically allows you no control over your bodily functions in the latter stages," he says.

Mercy killing through a lethal injection should be allowed, he says, and should be overseen by two independent doctors at the patient's request after counselling.

There are plenty of disability

groups who are horrified at such proposals.

David Colley, chair of the British Council of Disabled People, insists disabled people would be targeted if euthanasia was permitted. He also believes they might feel pressured into voluntary euthanasia through a lack of services.

Phil rejects such arguments.

"What I find appalling in this country is that we believe we are so inept.

"We do not trust ourselves to put somebody out of their misery without fear of abuse."

Phil went for two months without solids before the Pretty ruling. After a brief return to solids, he went back on hunger strike and only drank 100 millilitres a day for three weeks. For four days he allowed himself only a sip of water in the morning. But he gave up in June.

"I was doing a pretty good job, but the pain level was unbelievable with cramps and headaches and general body pain," he says.

But now he and Sheryn are working on a book about their lives and the time they have spent together. Much of it is about having fun, though his illness is covered too.

Phil hopes to get to the point where he and Sheryn meet before he dies so that others will be able to complete the book.

Other people may have to take the euthanasia debate forward too. But he and Diane Pretty have done much to get the issue aired. Some will thank them. Others, it has to be said, will not.

MND Association, tel: 08457 626262.

Voluntary Euthanasia Society, tel: 020 7937 7770.

## 'We do not trust ourselves to put somebody out of their misery without fear of abuse'

It will kill him. The average life expectancy is just 14 months.

Earlier this year, he tried to starve himself to death. He wanted to raise awareness so that the law would be changed

following the case of Diane Pretty, who also had MND. In May, she asked the European Court of Human Rights for a guarantee that her husband Brian would not be prosecuted if

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# Letters to the Editor

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e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



## How to deal with selfish concert goers

I am able bodied, my friend uses a wheelchair and we love concerts. On several occasions we have had the same treatment as Stephen Bridge (*DN*, July). An on-going dispute with the MEN arena has just been sorted out a year on, after a very bad time at the Eagles concert, which cost us £40 each.

The Notts Royal Centre deserves a lot of credit, though. Richard Smedley, the house manager, has looked after us very well and at our last

concert upgraded us to front row seating.

But the real problem remains the thoughtless people who stand up in front of someone in a wheelchair and don't give them a second thought.

Liz Osmond  
West Bridgford

I suggest Stephen Bridge sues the Apollo theatre using the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). I had a similar experience in Hull about 18 months

ago at the council owned Hull City Hall. Within a miraculously short time of the Humberside Law Centre submitting my appeal, a new, raised wheelchair users' platform was provided.

I lost my DDA case on a technicality, but we have won improved access. Sometimes the threat of a DDA case can generate action, despite the weakness of the law.

Mark Baggey  
Choices and Rights Disability Coalition, East Yorkshire

## Lib Dems seek your views

According to the Audit Commission's report, £210m of public money promised for disabled services (not £200m as reported in *DN* June) has not been delivered. So improvements in the quality of life for disabled people recommended by the last *Fully Equipped* report in 2000 have been frustrated. Sadly, this looks like further evidence that little priority has

been given in Whitehall to securing greater independence of disabled people. I am looking at practical ways in which disabled people are given as much say as possible in securing the equipment they need, and welcome correspondence.

Cllr Paul Holmes MP  
Lib Dem Disability Spokesperson  
House of Commons, SW1A 0AA  
email: holmesp@parliament.uk

## Home to close

The MS Society proposes to close their home, Orcombeleigh, in Exmouth. All of us who go there know what a great mistake this would be.

It is a real haven for people with MS and their carers. I myself have this condition and can only speak highly of the care given by the wonderful staff.

Miriam Tolman  
Exmouth

## Our front line fears

We have a recurring problem associated with the use of the blue badge.

My son, 10, who is on the autistic spectrum, receives the high rate of Disability Living Allowance and has a disabled parking badge and a RADAR key. His physical appearance is one of a typical child (albeit a very "bouncy" one), but due to the nature of his impairment, he needs an extremely high level of support, especially when he goes out.

So why do I get hassle/abuse from people, both staff and public, when we use facilities for disabled people? (Yet they still moan when I take him into the Ladies with me). These disabled loos are put in to make our lives work, not to make life an easy number, nor as some sort of compensation.

We don't always use the badge or the key, but when my son needs predictability, we do.

With the crackdown on parking abuse, I am concerned that I will be on the front line of more interrogations and grilling from those who don't understand that it is not just those with physical impairments that can use these facilities.

Sharon Scoffings (e-mail)

## £10 million not coming our way

Richard Brewster, chief executive of Scope, indicated that the government has allocated £10m extra funding to support young disabled people in education, and that Scope has been asked to help deliver communication aids to severely impaired children (*DN*, May).

Unfortunately, the article does not make clear that disabled individuals in Wales are not included in this scheme.

I trust Scope will, through dialogue with government, take steps to ensure that an even distribution of much needed funding in the essential area of augmentative and alternative communication takes place as a matter of priority.

For people to be deprived of an opportunity to facilitate active communication, purely on the basis of where they live and are educated, cannot be justified.

Linda Rees  
Parent governor  
Craig y Parc School  
Cardiff

*Richard Brewster writes: The Department for Education and Skills' funding for the Becta Communication Aids Project covers England only. Scope continues to campaign for Government (including the National Assembly for Wales) to ensure the widest provision of communication aids for people who need them.*



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## PC pulse

by Dan Batten

### Off the point

The "big issue" in *The Sun's* letters page on 3 July was how the mentally ill Eden Strang had been released from prison after 21 months. He'd attacked 11 churchgoers with a samurai sword. Amongst the letters condemning Strang as a lunatic, one asked whether he had been offered sufficient treatment to "cure" him. Did the writer send his letter to the right page?



### Rope-y title

Touring company Oddsocks Productions has replaced the word "hunchback" with "bell-ringer" in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* to avoid offending people with scoliosis or spina bifida. Should I, with CP, be lobbying my local McDonald's to remove those horribly offensive milk "shakes" from their menu? Lighten up, Oddsocks.



# 'Epilepsy will not stop me'

There is widespread ignorance about epilepsy, says Anthony Cornish, and he wants to do something about it

**H**ave you ever had to struggle to remember where you are or what you were doing?

For me, there is a sense of total despair until my memory, spatial awareness and reason return. It happens every day so it can affect my self-confidence. I am one of over 300,000 people in the UK who has epilepsy.

Each day I have a number of simple partial seizures (SPS). There is a general pattern of 4-10 days when an SPS will develop into a complex partial seizure (CPS). It is a CPS that causes the most disruption. It can involve anything from leaving shopping in a supermarket, riding my bicycle dangerously, wandering around aimlessly while playing a hockey match, or walking out of my house half dressed.

Once, travelling home on the London Underground, I was caught unawares by a sudden tensing of my brain, which caused the release of body chemicals. My breathing was



interrupted and I felt a rush of adrenalin from my head to my stomach. An SPS was putting me on alert for the instinctive fight or flight. I tried to re-engage my thoughts and feelings by looking at things around me and focusing on my breathing. When I can take a deep breath again, another surge of chemicals relaxes my muscles enabling me to breathe a sigh of relief – the SPS has finished.

But on this occasion the SPS became a CPS. The feeling is

one of total relief, the freedom of not having control – like sky diving or sitting on a roller coaster. It lasted for a fraction of a second and then I lost consciousness and any responsibility for my body. To people on the train I may have behaved like an alcoholic or someone sleepwalking. Apparently, I pulled the emergency handle.

When I became aware of my surroundings, about 20 minutes had passed. I was in a small room, being questioned by the

happened. With this came the embarrassment and depression that another gap in my life had just happened.

Epilepsy is a neurological condition rather than a mental illness, but secondary effects from seizures impair a person's mental health. Then there is the social stigma. People do not realise how widespread epilepsy is and yet it is not recognised. How many people with epilepsy are shown on TV? Public ignorance about neurological

condition, celebrities included, leaving the popular idea of epilepsy as being general seizures. I was one of them until my condition could no longer be controlled by medication.

If these people would come out of the closet, if characters in films would portray the condition and public education was improved, epilepsy might one day become as acceptable as a headache.

Meanwhile, I am planning to take concrete steps myself. I have learned to live with epilepsy and I want to help people in the same position. To do this, I am going to return to full-time education to become an occupational therapist. That will enable me to motivate people who have severe problems living with the condition.

Epilepsy will not stop me leading a life that is adventurous, and that is something I can teach others. [antcornish@freenetname.co.uk](mailto:antcornish@freenetname.co.uk)

**'If these people would come out of the closet, if characters in films would portray the condition and public education was improved, epilepsy might one day become as acceptable as a headache'**

transport police. Drifting in and out of consciousness with no memory made it difficult to work out if the situation was fact or fiction. Once I was fully conscious, I could explain my medical condition and understand what had

conditions and mental illness, and how they can overlap, needs to be dispelled once and for all.

At least 80 per cent of people with epilepsy take medication that controls their seizures. It is they who then disown the

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Travel goodies, accessible art, wartime memorabilia, ferry travel and daredevil driving exploits? Part

# The genuine article

Libby Cross checks out the revamped Manchester Art Gallery and finds both exhibits and access to be picture perfect



**T**he Manchester Art Gallery has reopened to the public after a massive rebuilding and refurbishment programme which has seen the original 19th century buildings beautifully restored and extended.

Considering the building's Victorian origins and its city centre location, the architects (Michael Hopkins and Partners) have done a remarkable job, providing excellent access without compromising the grandeur of the old.

Situated in the heart of the city, the gallery has something for everyone, whether you are interested in contemporary or more "traditional" art, crafts, design and ceramics, or in the kind of interactive pieces which may tempt children into thinking about art.

The gallery has been criticised for trying to broaden the appeal of art. In fact, it successfully combines "high brow" and populist, with simple captions explaining the context and history of each piece.

There are about 25,000

artworks on display. You will find paintings by artists as varied as Rossetti, Gainsborough, Rodin, and Hockney alongside beautiful decorative art, from ancient Greek pottery to a vase by Picasso.

On the ground floor, adjacent to the very tempting gift shop, the CIS Manchester Gallery displays work by the city's artists and designers, past and present, showing the different ways Manchester has been portrayed over the years – from Lowry's visions of mill-workers to contemporary images of city landscapes.

On the day we visited, by far the most popular (and less spacious) area was the Clore Interactive Gallery, where children of all ages can try out various activities, from matching coloured gels on a lighted panel for the younger ones, to animated "chariot racing" in a scale model of a Roman amphitheatre.

The architects have linked two pre-existing buildings with a paved-stone atrium of steel and glass, which gives the

gallery a delightfully airy and daylit atmosphere and offers the visitor a place to pause between rooms.

Access to everything is excellent: there are motorised wheelchairs in the foyer, accessible toilets and an induction loop system, information packs in braille and large print, and audio guides.

Soon there will be a "handling trail" in the Gallery of Craft and Design for visually-impaired visitors to explore the artwork by touch, and there are longer-term plans for signed guided tours. *Manchester Art Gallery, Mosley Street, Manchester, tel: 0161 235 8888, [www.manchester.galleries.org](http://www.manchester.galleries.org) Admission free, 13 orange/blue badge parking spaces about 400 yards away in St Peter's Square. Open Tuesday-Sunday 10am-5pm, closed Mondays except Bank Holidays, and 1 January, Good Friday, 24-26 and 31 December.*

**I**n stark contrast to the classical grandeur and welcoming ambience of the Manchester Art Gallery, the building housing the new Imperial War Museum North (IWM) is designed to unsettle and discomfort the visitor – war, after all, is not a comfortable or welcoming experience, and designer Daniel Libeskind wanted the oppressiveness of conflict to be reflected in the "feel" of the building itself.

Situated in Salford Quays, the IWM's looming exterior does not encourage you to enter on a whim, and it's not the place to go if you prefer the traditional style of museum with wooden display cabinets, hushed corridors and numerous suits of armour.

Instead, it is designed to immerse the visitor in various key themes, from "the experience of war" to "the Commonwealth and war" and "women and war".

Structurally, the museum is divided into "shards", representing a globe shattered by conflict into the three combat arenas – air, land and sea. The air shard takes the form of a tower with an observation point reached by a lift, which, unfortunately, was out of use on the day we visited.

## The game

Battles, bullets and on display at the IWM North, says Libby Cross



War wheels: An army truck on show at the IWM North.

The main exhibition hall is housed in the curved earth shard and is an extraordinary arena with a sloping asphalt floor and several side galleries, or "silos", in which the key themes are displayed.

The walls, floor and ceiling

"...it was wonderful to be independent again. We recommend your to anyone who needs a wheelchair access

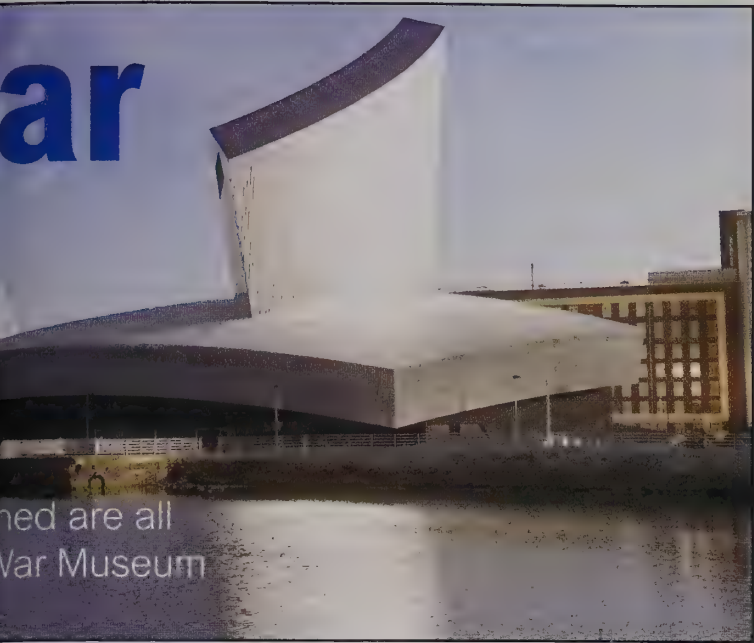
Mrs. Collins from Bristol



Restoration piece: Building works at the gallery have meant access is far better for disabled art lovers.



DN's out and about series has them all



ar  
shed are all  
War Museum

of the main hall double as giant canvases for "the big picture", an audio-visual show which uses the photographic and audio archives of the IWM to further explore the key themes. The shows run once every hour for 15 minutes. During each showing, the lights in the exhibition hall are dimmed and although announcements are made beforehand, some visitors may find themselves disoriented in the gloom. Unfortunately, the lights go out also in the adjoining silos, so visitors are obliged to wait for

the end of "the big picture" to see each display properly. Visually-impaired visitors could have been better catered for, but otherwise access to the Museum is fairly good, with on-site orange/blue badge parking, accessible toilets, and large-print information packs. There are plans to introduce audio guides. *Imperial War Museum North, Trafford Wharf Road, Trafford Park, Manchester, tel: 0161 836 4000, www.iwm.org.uk/north Admission free. Open every day 10am-7pm, except Christmas Day and Boxing Day.*

# A drive on the wild side

Ever wanted to tear around on four wheels at top speed in complete safety? Jane Shepherd puts her foot down

**T**hree spinally injured former jockeys, myself (walking wounded) and assorted non-disabled people went wild recently on a motor safari near Wrexham.

First up was quad biking. I approached this cautiously, having turned over my friend's quad bike last year at high speed on my first outing.

The aim was to get round a muddy hilltop course without knocking over any cones.

After a few practice laps we strapped on our brain buckets and the stopwatch came out for time trials. "Accuracy is more important than speed", insisted our instructor. "For every cone you knock over, you lose a lap." Then straight on to the seriously muddy 4WD off-roading experience.

My challenge was getting into the vehicle – a standard Land Rover. One disabled participant had brought his own Range Rover and the other two (who weigh about 14 stone between them) were transferred between vehicles with mini-



Driven by danger: Go off the beaten track and get your adrenalin flowing on a motor safari weekend

mum fuss. The organisers immediately summoned another, more accessible, vehicle from the perilous slopes on the far side of the hill and, assisted by a strapping young man, I made it to the back seat. When it was my turn to drive, I just reclined the front seat and shuffled forwards.

It was a fantastic experience. "No need for hand controls" I was told, "just start the engine in first gear and let the vehicle take you forwards. To stop, just turn off the engine". Easy peasy.

These 3 litre 4WDs cope with everything – up to 45 degree angles (we went to about 30 degrees apparently) – over huge muddy puddles, traversing up hill and down dale accompanied by excited squeals from the back. Imagine getting to the top of a hill and the road simply disappears. Stick with it and trust your wheels. Talking of sticks, mine came in very handy for pressing the accelerator for a bit more oomph. Well, it is off road.

After a tasty lunch, we tackled archery – great fun, and I actually hit the target a couple of times – and blindfold driving, which is really a trust

game where your teammates guide you around the course with varying degrees of success. OK, I mangled a flag, but don't blame me.

After this action-packed day, prizes are awarded for the top scoring team and you come away with your own Driver's Log Book. It was a really great day out.

Motor Safari offers various options: one day and weekend courses for groups and the corporate market as well as Sky Safaris (helicopter/glider), Water Safaris (whitewater rafting etc) and Target Safaris (archery/clay pigeon shooting/laser/air/"splat" guns). They don't cater specifically for disabled people but are very keen to accommodate any special needs so as to give people an enjoyable, exciting and inclusive experience.

A new, purpose-built centre will open in North Wales later in the year. They also have a centre at Newbury, Berkshire, and operate from 90 places around the UK.

From £30, Motor Safari, Morgan Events, tel: 01978 754533, fax: 01978 754534. Morgan Events will feature on Blue Peter on 14 August.

**Mrs. Collins loves** how easily their compact Kangoo goes up their narrow drive and into the garage. Her husband Roy just loves being able to get out and about in it, particularly with their friends and relatives.

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# Ferry good!

Planning a day trip to France? Denny Denly compares the ways to get there



**A**s an old polio, I can't walk at all. I travel everywhere in my wheelchair and my wife Cooky does all the work getting my wheelchair in and out of vehicles.

We live close to Dover and the Channel Tunnel at Folkestone. In the last few months, we have made seven day trips to France – three by ferry and four by train. There are some big differences.

## Check-in

For the ferry, you check in 20 minutes before sailing, and departures are every 45 minutes. The crossing is 75 minutes plus 15 minutes for berthing, so the total is about 1 hour 50 minutes.

At check-in, you are given wheelchair stickers and a special lane number. Staff are courteous and differentiate between people who can and can't walk, putting the latter nearest to the lift.



Two to travel: Denny and Cooky get some time to relax

Eurotunnel says you need to arrive 30 minutes before departure. Trains are every 15 minutes in the timetable, but every time we have travelled, there have only been trains every half hour. It takes 35 minutes to get through the tunnel, so the whole journey is about one hour five minutes, 45 minutes faster than the ferry.

That is the theory. In practice, it is a different story.

At check-in, you have to declare you cannot walk and are told you have to be loaded first at the front of the train for safety reasons. You are told to follow the lane with the international wheelchair symbol. Time after time, we have found ourselves facing a barrier with a red light, while cars with able-bodied drivers sail past. You have to be at the barrier 30 minutes before departure to board the train. Add to this the time at check-in, a slow-moving queue past border control, and another ten minutes after the last car has been loaded.

**S**cottish-based travellers can now stow their cars below decks and enjoy the comforts of the Superfast ferry crossing from Rosyth to Zeebrugge. No more starting your holiday in a state of stress and near-exhaustion after a ten-hour minimum journey south.

All parts of the vessel are accessible. Two cabins, each four-berth with en-suite shower and WC, have been designed for full wheelchair access, with extra-wide doors, wet-floor shower areas and all controls at waist height. Doors are heavy, but all have an automatic opening facility operated by a push-pad at waist height.

Costs vary according to time of year, length of visit and the type of accommodation. At present there are no concessions for disabled travellers, but this is due for review, along with the rest of the pricing structure, at the end of the year. In high season, departing on Friday or Saturday and staying for over

two nights, a couple taking a two-berth inside cabin would pay £175 each, plus £90 for their car. Children under 12 travel half price, and there is a ten per cent discount for those between 13 and 25, and over 60.

It's not cheap, but it's fun. The vessel offers five-star comfort, with a la carte and buffet restaurants, bars, a dancing lounge, casino and many other facilities. There is even an on-deck swimming pool. Enough said!

Total journey time is 17 and a half hours. Zeebrugge is the port for the mediaeval city of Bruges, and is ideally placed for onward travel to Germany, France, the Netherlands and further afield. For Scottish travellers, this ferry makes a very welcome addition to existing cross-channel options.

Helen Welsh

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info.scotland@superfast.com*

## Cost

**Ferry:** With Voyager Frequent Traveller, we get a ten per cent discount on promotional fares and £2 off by booking on the internet. We get one point, worth £1, for every £10 spent on fares, redeemable on future journeys. The average cost of our three ferry trips was £23.50.

**Train:** As members of Eurotunnel Points Plus, we again get a ten per cent discount on promotional fares and £2 off via the internet. As for the points system, you collect one point for every £1/euro spent on fares or at the scheme's partners. The average cost of our four trips was £47.03.

## Our choice

On balance, we prefer P&O Stena Line. They are far more welcoming and understanding of the needs of disabled passengers. Eurotunnel resents questions about cancelled trains and disabled passenger procedures. However, they are a younger organisation and we hope that they improve with age. P&O Stena Line, tel: 087 0600 0611, minicom: 01304 863090, website: [www.posl.com](http://www.posl.com) Eurotunnel, tel: 08000 969992, [www.eurotunnel.com](http://www.eurotunnel.com)

In other words, you need one hour and ten minutes before departure and the total time from Folkestone to Calais is one hour 45 minutes, just five minutes faster than the ferry. Eurotunnel needs to revise their recommendations for disabled travellers – it is impossible to get on to the train if you arrive 30 minutes before.

We once bucked the system by not declaring the wheelchair and not taking the wheelchair lane. We sped in with the able-bodied drivers towards the back of the train, taking just 18 minutes between check-in and departure. But that is breaking the rules and Cooky has forbidden me to do it again.

## Comfort

In the ferry, you get out of the car and go up in the lift to enjoy the facilities on board. Once there, you can tuck into a big breakfast, read the paper and do some shopping. There are accessible toilets.

In the train, there is no need to get out of the car. Facilities are minimal. They claim there are toilets every third carriage, but the car behind is parked so close you can't get the wheelchair out.

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



## Don't just sit there!


Dan Batten helps you beat boredom

 Fancy a flutter on a few fillies? The track at Chester Racecourse could be a good bet. The course holds meetings until September and now has an improved viewing platform, as well as a new marquee for wheelchair users, complete with TV to watch the races. Tel: 01244 304600, [www.chester-races.co.uk](http://www.chester-races.co.uk)



 If Tiger Woods and co drive you wild, the British Golf Museum at St Andrews (above) is a perfect place to spend the day. Drawing on 500 years of history, the museum traces the development of the game at home and abroad. Tel: 01334 460 046.

 If you are into the secret side of war, check out the Carpetbagger Aviation Museum in Harrington, Northampton. Situated in the administration buildings of a wartime airfield used during World War II, it houses extensive records of previously secret missions. Tel: 01604 686608.

 Maybe a long stroll in the countryside will make your day. The Disabled Ramblers have lined up a series of events that are suitable for all, including the Quantock Hills, 14 August, and the AA Ridgeway Wheelchair Challenge, 22 August. Contact Dr Mike Bruton, tel/fax: 01628 621414, e-mail: [mike@thebrute.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:mike@thebrute.freeserve.co.uk)



 If you're a pottery lover, the Wedgwood Story will be just your cup of tea. The visitor centre is in the Wedgwood factory, Stoke-on-Trent, where you can see potters and decorators at work. There is also a shop, a museum and the chance to make your very own masterpiece. Tel: 01782 204218, [www.wedgwood.com](http://www.wedgwood.com)

# Kit for carefree travel

If you're on the move this summer, you'll need to stock up on travel-size goodies, sun protection and first aid provisions. Anne Davies has everything you need to know

**L**ike to travel light? Well, at last, manufacturers are coming up with travel-size products you can squeeze into the smallest bag.

Charles Worthington has Takeaways for hair and body and Tiny Treats packs of products for different hair types (C). Takeaways are £1.50 each, while packs start at £5.95. Stocked by Boots nationwide.

[www.cwlondon.com](http://www.cwlondon.com)  
Liz Earle has travel kits from £15 and some products in 50ml (around £5). It has launched the new Naturally Active skincare sun range for sensitive skin. Mail order, tel: 01983 813913, [www.lizearle.com](http://www.lizearle.com)

To freshen up on a journey, try Nivea for Men's new refreshing

wipes, packed in small sachets. Dove hydrating cleansing cloths are good for sensitive skins and Roc also has cleansing wipes. All are available from high-street chemists and fit into a pocket or hand luggage.

And when the inevitable visit to the public loos occurs, it's useful to have some of Jeyes' new Parazone antibacterial toilet cleaning wipes (D). Available at high-street chemists and supermarkets, they come in packs of 40 for around £1.29.

Disposable razors for men and women are a good standby if you are in an area where there may be power cuts. The Supermax 3 with three blades gives an ultra-close shave in one stroke.

Each has a lubricating strip with tea tree oil and aloe vera to moisten the skin. Available in high-street chemists, in packs of four (£2.49) or eight (£4.49).

The Savlon first aid kit is a must. Weighing

barely 50g, it contains plasters, wipes, antiseptic cream, dressings, bandage and pins as well as emergency first aid hints. £4.05 from good chemists.

Colgate's new two-in-one toothpaste and mouth wash gel will save space. It's available in most chemists and costs around £1.99.

Research has shown that Delph suncream (A) is the most cost-effective, fully dermatologically tested and proven in the market. Available as a cream or spray in SPF5 from 4 to 30. Prices start at £2.99. Each bottle comes with a free aftersun lotion.

If you are looking for hypoallergenic cream, Ambre Solaire's new Mexoryl filtration system is worth trying. It's fragrance free. Prices range from around £8.29 to £9.99. All good chemists.

If you are on a more

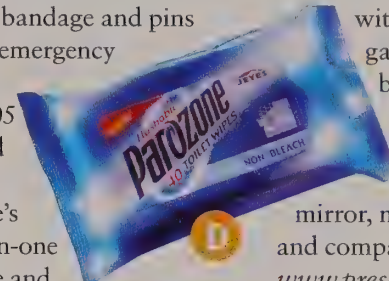
challenging trip, Presents Direct can help keep you safe with the adventure gadget (E). It has a bright light visible up to one mile, a whistle, thermometer, mirror, magnifying glass and compass. All for £9. [www.presentsdirect.com](http://www.presentsdirect.com)

The Pifco World Travel range (B) includes a kettle, complete with two cups and spoons for £12.99, a travel iron for £13.99 and a travel hairdryer for £7.99. Tel: 0161 947 3170.

Or if you're in the car, try a kettle powered from the cigarette lighter. £14.99. Tel: 0870 908 7002, [www.innovations.co.uk](http://www.innovations.co.uk)

At the end of your journey, a light, fresh eau de toilette will always lift your spirits. Try Guerlain's new Herba Fresca or Penhaligon's Bluebell.

Enjoy yourselves, wherever you go.



## Rally round the flag

**A**n integral part of summer is a trip to the beach. Unfortunately, problems with uneven surfaces and bad access can deter many disabled visitors. But if you find yourself a beach that has been awarded a blue flag, none of this should be a problem.

The flag scheme was invented in France in 1985 to measure the quality of bathing water and sewage treatment, and was adopted by the whole of Europe in 1987.

The good news for disabled sun worshippers is that blue flag recipients must have one fully accessible beach "in each municipality", meaning that they must provide access ramps and disabled loos. Unfortunately, a clause has been written in where all of these good intentions go out of the window if "the topography does not allow for it".



### Blue Flag Campaign

But if you reach the beach, other benefits of blue flag status become obvious. The water is certain to be clean: it has to meet certain standards, including the EU bathing water directive. The beach must also be cleaned daily, which besides the health benefits means that the sand is safer for wheelchair and buggy tyres. You can also be sure that first aid will be close at hand at easily identifiable positions. And if you take a dip, you are safe in the knowledge that top-notch safety equipment and lifesavers are just a stone's throw away. Torbay, Scarborough and the Isle of Wight all boast approved beaches. For other beaches, go on the web: [www.blueflag.org/Map\\_UK.asp](http://www.blueflag.org/Map_UK.asp)

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*no nonsense vehicle conversions*



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Wouldn't it be great to live in a "smart" house with sensors and easy controls to operate everything? John Pring visits a new development where the tenants have just that

# Opening new doors

**A** high-tech housing development in the south of England could offer hope to disabled people who dream of enjoying a more independent life.

The new six-flat scheme on a small estate in Portsmouth is the first to use so-called "smart" technology to offer another housing option to people with severe disabilities who might otherwise have been restricted to residential care.

The project is a collaboration between the University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth City Council and John Grooms Housing Association (JGHA), with part-funding from the Housing Corporation. It took five years to come to fruition.

The three first-floor flats have one or two pieces of smart technology, such as a door entry system that allows tenants to see their visitor on a TV screen and let them in.

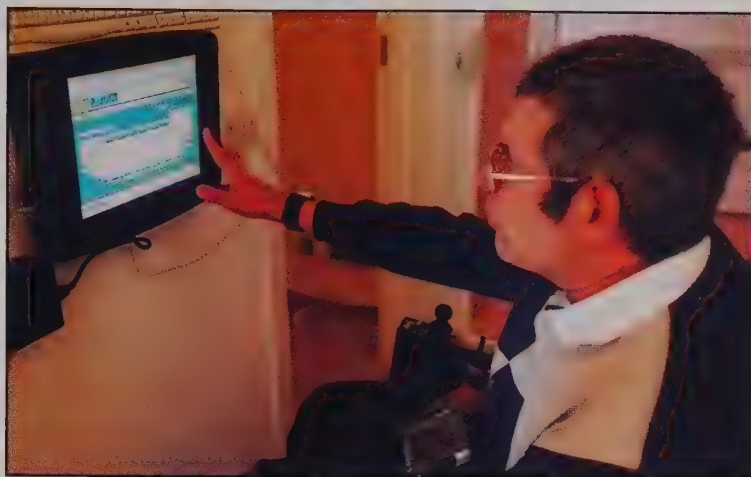
But the three ground-floor flats are almost completely electronically controlled, and have sensors, video cameras, automatic locks and other appliances, each of which has its own microprocessor.

David Harmer, JGHA chief executive, says the project is "a giant step forward" towards helping disabled people maximise their independence.

"Smart housing is more than just clever technology, though," he says. "No two disabled people have the same set of needs, so we have developed housing that can be uniquely tailored to each individual."

The tenant can fill the kitchen sink to a certain level just by pressing a button.

Windows can be opened and closed, curtains drawn and the television turned on, by pressing



Screen test: Sydney Tallack shows off his flat's touch-screen computer

a switch on a handset, using voice-activated technology, a computer keyboard, a touch-screen handset or even a pointer attached to the head.

Sensors detect when someone enters a room, and adjust the heating and lighting accordingly. Other sensors realise when it is getting dark and increase the lighting inside the flat, and automatic doors can detect obstructions.

The sensors and controls interact with each other and with the tenant.

For instance, if the flat is empty and someone comes to the door, the tenant's mobile phone rings and they can speak to the caller and even let them in if it is someone they know.

If one of the gizmos breaks down, a message is sent to an engineer, and another goes to the supplier for a new part.

Keith Chapman, a senior lecturer at Portsmouth University's School of Environmental Design and Management, has been working on the project since 1997, with the help of colleague Dr Kevin McCartney.

They consulted about 800 disabled people and groups. Above all, these people said security was vital and the homes should "look normal".

Chapman and McCartney are examining new potential applications of the technology, for instance to provide halfway houses for patients leaving hospital, or to rehabilitate

people with brain damage. Chapman has spoken to organisations interested in using smart technology to help people with Alzheimer's.

Now, he says, it is just a question of securing funding for new schemes.

JGHA hopes to incorporate successful aspects of the scheme into its existing properties for disabled people.

The cost of adapting a wheelchair-accessible home to make it smart, about £25,000 at present, is bound to fall as new companies enter the market.

Vicky Hardman, a JGHA spokeswoman, says: "The whole country will be looking to the things we have learned here. This is only the beginning."



The thing Sydney Tallack enjoys most about his new home is the peace and quiet. From living in a home with 25 other disabled people, he can now shut out the rest of the world by pressing a button on a hand-held device (pictured).

Mr Tallack, a wheelchair user who has multiple sclerosis, moved into one of the three high-dependency, ground-floor flats in June. He says the boost it has given his independence has been "phenomenal". He has gone from needing round-the-clock care to just 20 hours a week.

"This place is going to be so good," says the former sergeant in the Royal Signals. "It feels great. You have no idea how it feels to be able to come in and shut the front door, go for a walk or go up the pub."

"I am not moving. My feet are nailed to the floor."

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Alan and Patricia Brant can't wait until their new flat is all wired up with its new smart technology. They moved into one of the first-floor flats in June and are looking forward to taking advantage of functions such as the electronic door and lights which will automatically come on if Mr Brant gets up during the night.

He has asthma, spinal disc problems and high blood pressure, and his wife has osteoarthritis and a hiatus hernia.

"Both of our problems are progressing quite quickly," says Mr Brant, "so lights that come on automatically will be of great assistance."

Mrs Brant adds: "We will be able to use the telephone to answer the door from our bed. That sort of thing will be very beneficial."





**Lucky Man: A Memoir**  
Michael J. Fox  
Ebury Press, £16.99

**A**lthough not a great book reader, I was interested to see how Parkinson's affected Michael J. Fox through the years. While the book goes back through his childhood,

I really wanted to read about the challenges he had when his Parky first developed.

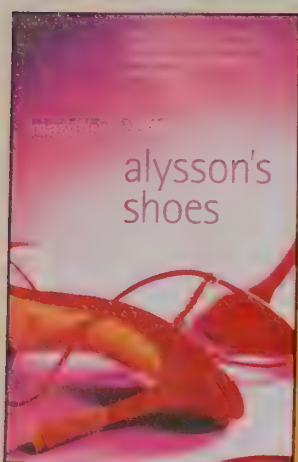
It is reassuring to know that no matter where you are in the world, diagnosis with Parkinson's is the same for most people. When Mr Fox writes about the time "the doctor asked me to touch the tip of each finger to the tip of my thumb, one after the other, again and again, each time more rapidly than the last", I remembered how I practiced this exercise before visiting my neurologist in my early days. It never worked.

People say it's all right for Michael J. Fox to have Parkinson's: he's loaded. Yes, he may be able to get alternative therapies when he wants them, but having money is irrelevant in

my eyes. He has Parkinson's, like many others, including me. What is good is that he is sharing it in a book which lets people see they are not alone. It was great to see him using an expression that many people with Parky can identify with: "I often appear sad on the outside while actually smiling, or at least smirking, on the inside."

I would recommend this book for anyone living with Parkinson's – reading it might help. As regards Mr Fox feeling lucky: read the book and you'll see exactly what he means. We all benefit from his lucky streak and from his efforts to raise awareness and fund research for Parkinson's in America and Britain.

**Gary Hattie**



**Alysson's Shoes**  
Margaret Leroy  
Flamingo, £9.99

**T**essa Craig is a young psychiatrist who commits an error of judgement. Asked by a superior to clear some beds,

she discharges a schizophrenic patient. The patient, Paula, protests that she's not well enough to be discharged, but Tessa insists she will be fine and is certain of her clinical judgement. Tragically, Paula is not fine after her release and stabs a stranger, Allyson, in the street. Tessa is condemned by her department. She decides to allay her own misery by seeing how Alysson's bereaved partner is faring. The result is surprising, and ensuing events lead the reader in a "dance macabre".

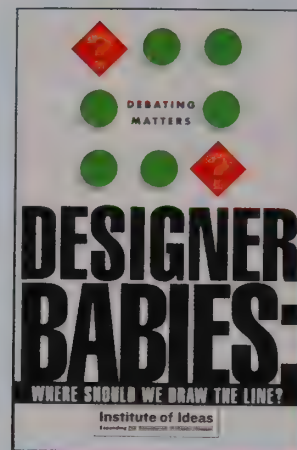
*Alysson's Shoes* is a highly charged page-turner. It's a readable novel about a doctor forced over the sharp edge of professionalism by conditions outside her control. One

can sympathise with such a professional, but what of the schizophrenic patient and others like her? Aside from the fact that Paula ends up rather more contented than our heroine, we learn little else of her and schizophrenia. This to me is an opportunity missed *par excellence*.

Leroy is clearly an excellent novelist and a clever wordsmith. She has a distinctive turn of phrase and a rare talent for detail. Some of her descriptions are sublime. However, the end of the story is unfinished, leaving me quite unsatisfied.

This is a well told tale, but it didn't quite "hit the spot".

**Judith Sly**



**Designer Babies: Where Should We Draw the Line?**  
Institute of Ideas/Hodder and Stoughton, £5.99

**T**his short book offers an excellent introduction to controversies surrounding prenatal genetic testing. Five essays explain the technologies, give the background, and develop arguments for and against these developments. Agnes Fletcher contributes a powerful disability rights critique, while the philosopher John Harris develops a libertarian position, arguing that parents should be able to choose for themselves whether to use technologies or select embryos. The debate swings with regard to the impact of genetics on disabled people, the rights of the embryo and the powers and limits of medicine.

There is a tendency for people to make up their mind too quickly on these questions, and a balanced book of this kind is to be welcomed. Everyone will be alternately enraged and

encouraged by what they read here, but all will emerge with a fuller grasp of the complexities of the issues.

Of course, in a brief book there will be absences. I would have liked more discussion of the broader social contexts and consequences of reproductive decisions. Choices tend to be treated as an individual matter, but they are influenced by broader cultural and social factors. Genetics could lead to very different views about disability, which might undermine both the lives of disabled people and the free choices of prospective parents. Moreover, there will be unequal access to reproductive technologies, and this may increase inequality with its negative social consequences.

This is why I disagree with those who argue for complete reproductive liberty. In an ethical society, individual freedom is regulated for the benefits of all. Juliet Tizzard maintains that you are either for or against choice, and it is impossible to want choice within limits. But limited choice is what we have, and what we should preserve through law and regulation. Regulation protects us from the consequences of our actions. It is future children who are the concern, and their choices and freedom are just as important as those of their parents.

**Tom Shakespeare**

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## Book news

**F**or history buffs, Doon Campbell's *Magic Mistress* (Tagman, £17.50), recounts his 30 years as a journalist for Reuters. Campbell has had one arm since birth, but that hasn't kept him

from interviewing Mao Tse-tung and Mahatma Gandhi, or from going into WW2 trenches with a typewriter on his back.

If young readers out there need something to read while waiting for the fifth Harry Potter book, Paul Waddingham has

adventures of sword and sorcery: *Journey to the Light* and *Ring of Jule* (Castle of Dreams, £3.99 each). A wheelchair user, Waddingham entertains while showing that people can get things done when they work together. For more info, go on the web: [www.j2books.com](http://www.j2books.com)

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TV



As if the cruel, cruel summer weather wasn't enough, the telly has been all doom and gloom as well.

While it may be commendable to highlight mental health problems and obesity in young people, and the plight of our increasing elderly population, it doesn't make for very uplifting viewing.

C4 served up *Young Minds* in its usual 7.55 slot, posing unanswerable questions like why a young man took his own life, followed by life in an adolescent psychiatric unit (*Inside My Head*) before ending the season with a drama – *Off Limits: Losing It*. By the end, I had almost given up the will to live myself.

At the twilight end of the market, C4's series on *Death* confirmed that the older we get, the more likely we are to get diabetes, cancer and heart disease. Tell us something we don't know.

The BBC offered another "fat kids show" with *Too Fat, Too Young* (BBC1), and we wept over three likeable young people who weigh 56 stone between them.

On the plus side, Robin Williams confirmed that laughter is indeed the best medicine with his film role as *Patch Adams*, the medic whose mirth prescriptions were just the ticket.

Not much laughter in the Lawler household. If you were wondering what had happened to Tayler Lawler, C5's *Driving Mum Crazy* kid with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, the drugs are still not working and a residential placement has broken down.

What we need is a change of scenery. How about Coney Island (America's answer to Blackpool – only worse)? In a bid to uncover the reality of sideshow freaks, Mat "thalidomide Ninja" Fraser gamely signed up as a performer for C4's *Born Freak*, finding the once popular seaside attractions losing their appeal. "The business has been killed by do-gooders," he was told. I wonder why that is.

Jane Shepherd

★★★★ excellent  
★★★ very good  
★★ good  
★ OK  
□ poor

Film



Talk to her (*Hable con ella*)



The latest offering from Spain's art house guru Pedro Almodovar shows the differing reactions of two men who meet and fall in love with women in comas.

Benigno is a nurse whose living room window faces the local ballet dancing studio. From his window he watches dancer Alicia and becomes infatuated. A chance drop of her purse gives him his one and only chance to talk to her – the next time he meets her is as her nurse after a traffic accident leaves her in a coma.

The other man is journalist Marco. He chases bullfighter Lydia for a profile as she is about to enter into her biggest ever fight, and the pair become close. But Lydia has a secret to tell him after the fight, a secret that Marco never gets to hear. Lydia is badly injured in the fight and – you guessed it – ends up in a coma in the same hospital as Alicia.

With the disabled

characters not speaking, the study is of the two men's relations to their partners. Benigno dotes on Alicia, doing everything for her, and he is genuinely happy to be near the woman he loves. As he has been caring for his recently deceased mother for four years, I couldn't help thinking his "love" for Alicia is more a replacement care job for him. His story is far more interesting than Marco's. This wanders a familiar path of grief and self-hatred that drags the film down, as do several lingering, voyeuristic shots of a naked Alicia in bed, where she appears to be more of a piece of manipulated meat than a person. There is also a strange film within the film which would probably be considered pornographic outside the art house circle.

The art house leanings are what spoil the film. The plot is contrived and implausible and many of the scenes look theatrical and forced. Despite this, the film is strangely moving and enjoyable, but I wish I knew why.

Dan Batten



Coming up



That international man of mystery, Austin Powers, finds himself back in the 1970s in *Goldmember*, opening 26 July. Verne Troyer (*below, left*) does double duty this time as both Mini-me and Mini-Austin. The film also features cameos by Tom Cruise, Ozzy Osbourne and Britney Spears. Yeah, baby!

The Scoliosis Association UK and photographer Patrick Lichfield have launched a new exhibition *Getting it Straight*, featuring photographs of celebrity backs (including Sarah Cox and Ewan MacGregor). The show is part of a larger campaign to raise awareness of scoliosis and encourage early

recognition and diagnosis of the condition. The Lowry Exhibition Centre, Manchester, 23-29 August. The exhibition then travels to Belfast, Glasgow and Cardiff in September and October. Tel: 020 8964 5343.

A calendar featuring work by artists with a learning disabilities is now available from the charity Mencap. *Open your Eyes* is a diverse collection that includes watercolours, pastels, silkscreen painting and a mosaic. For more information or to order a calendar for £8.50, contact Mencap, tel: 020 7696 6942.

*Spiderman, Star Wars Episode II* and *Panic Room* (among other films) are now showing in subtitled



versions at selected theatres throughout the UK. To check for theatres and show times, visit the website at [www.yourlocalcinema.com](http://www.yourlocalcinema.com)

Chicken Shed is taking *Global-Eyes* to the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, 1-3 August. This dance production tackles the topical theme of globalisation, considering the power of the planet and the devastation that humans are capable of causing. Tickets are £8-£12, tel: 020 8292 9222, minicom: 020 8350 0676. See review, DN September.

The 56th Edinburgh Festival Fringe takes place 4-26 August and, with around 20,000 performances on offer, there should be something to please everyone. Try *The Mute Who Was Dreamed*, by Iran's Theatre Bazi, the story of a deaf child's relationship with her oppressive carer; stand-up comedian Francesca Martinez' *I'm Perfect* show; *Prometheus by the Side* by the Side company of learning disabled actors; or *Angels of the Universe*, an award-winning, one-man story of mental illness in Reykjavik. For a brochure, call 0907 159 2002 or send an A4 SAE with four first-class stamps to Fringe Programme, 180 High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1QS. For more details or to book tickets, tel: 0131 226 0000 or visit [www.edfringe.com](http://www.edfringe.com)

Video



Drive



In Raina Haig's *Drive*, a middle-aged couple are driving through the country, bickering coldly, on their way to place flowers on a grave, when a breakdown leads to a disastrous day. Trapped while they wait for a train, they each have a narrow escape. The end is ambiguous: are they moving closer together or hiding secrets that will blow them apart?

Several aspects of the film, such as the use of sound to open the story, show that it is the work of a talented, visually impaired director.

But *Drive*'s most distinctive feature is that it includes audio description as an integral part of the film. Bob Peck provides a firm voiceover that gives all key details for visually impaired audiences without being irritating for sighted viewers.

*Drive* doesn't need extra prints or special screenings to be accessible. Everybody shares the same film. It's the old message about access: if you build it in early enough, it's not difficult.

So, if Raina Haig can do it on a minute budget, when will we see a Hollywood blockbuster that everyone can go to?

Allan Sutherland



# 'We wanted to make his life easier'



Fit to travel: Alex (right) enjoys the sights and sounds of Venice with his Mum, Tricia, and brother Jamie.

Alex Kemp writes:

I am deaf, but I like to hear with my cochlear implant. I can hear my Mum on the phone and I like listening to Robbie Williams. I also like playing Nintendo 64 and watching TV. I can hear it, but it's much easier for me if there are subtitles. My favourite programme is *Eastenders*; I wish all the programmes had subtitles like that.

I love horseriding, and ride at the Diamond Centre every Saturday. I have to use my radio aid with my implant so I can hear the teacher when she is a long way from me. I am in the Dressage team now and we do competitions.

I also love swimming, but have to take my implant off so I can't hear anything. I wish they would make one to wear in the water so I could hear all the time.

Eleven years ago, Tricia Kemp decided to get a cochlear implant for her son Alex. The process not only changed life for him – it has changed her outlook as well

I will never forget how I felt when my youngest son, Alex, now 13, was diagnosed as being profoundly deaf. I felt as if part of me had died. But actually something was born within me that turned me into a stronger and, I believe, better person.

As a family, we were entering a world where we would face many challenges, come into conflict with professionals and make very strong friendships with people we would otherwise never have met. I was desperate to do all I could to help Alex, and we quickly climbed a steep learning curve to find out as much as we could about deafness and communication, and we started to learn to sign.

The effects of deafness on a child are isolation and frustration. As parents, we saw a wider picture: distress knowing he would not hear even the loudest of warning screams as he rushed towards a busy road; pain seeing him excluded from conversations; heartache watching him unable to join in party games, like pass the parcel, because he couldn't hear the music as he sat in silence.

It seemed that adulthood would be harder for him than for a hearing person; less choice, less independence. How would he manage at a doctor's appointment? He would need

world. We were sure that, even if he only had an awareness of environmental sound, this would help alert him to potential dangers, would lessen the sense of isolation and improve his quality of life.

In choosing an implant for Alex, we were not denying his deafness, nor trying to change him into a hearing person. He was and will always be deaf. We simply wanted to open as many avenues for him as possible and make his life easier.

Alex has had his implant for eleven years. He puts it on when he wakes as routinely as his clothes. It's a part of him. He has no problem with his identity; he says: "I am deaf, but I hear with my implant". I am pleased he accepts his deafness.

The reality of the device has far exceeded our expectations and even our secret hopes. It has taken some time, but it now enables him to communicate by speech, use a normal telephone and listen to his walkman through headphones. Without an implant, Alex would have had no choice; his world would have been silent. Now he has a choice: to hear or not to hear.

None of this could have been achieved without a high level of support, and he will continue to need support, although to a lesser extent, if he is to reach his full potential.

**'In choosing an implant for Alex, we were not denying his deafness, nor trying to change him into a hearing person. He was and will always be deaf'**

an interpreter, or would perhaps have to communicate by written notes. Of course, it could be done, but to us hearing parents, it seemed a bleak outlook.

In an ideal world, everyone would be able to sign, but we all know it is not an ideal world. Most people hear and speak – and do not sign. Many have never come into contact with a deaf person. They don't know how to react or how to communicate, so they tend to ignore the deaf person. It's just fear of the unknown.

Although we were learning to sign and getting to know a few deaf people, we are a hearing family and couldn't change that. We could sign and be a part of Alex's world but, if possible, we wanted him to at least have access to our hearing

There can be absolutely no doubt that being able to hear has improved Alex's quality of life beyond all measure. Apart from our love, his hearing is the greatest gift he has ever received.

I also know that Alex would not be where he is now had we not been prepared to fight a few battles for what he needed along the way. But that's one of the roles of a parent. If we don't fight for what our children need, who else will? The love a parent feels for a child with special needs is particularly strong, and it has certainly given me the determination to face up to the battles – and win!

All that matters to me is that Alex has a full and happy life with the same opportunities as his hearing peers.

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In the second part of our new series, Dave Crawl goes off to the dogs to place his bets

# Who let the dogs out?

**B**eing a native eastender, and a bit of a gambler, I've been to the dog races countless times in my 18 years of betting. But when *DN* asked me to go to Walthamstow Stadium again, I wasn't going to refuse another trip. Luckily, my local buses are wheelchair friendly, so the money I would waste on a cab could now be wisely invested on a dog and some refreshment.

At the track, you'll notice the turnstile entrances. Panic not: there is a gate that a friendly security guard will open for you. Once inside, the stadium is on two levels. The upper level is like a football stand and therefore inaccessible to wheelchair users, and there is no area set aside for disabled people on the ground level either. I'm not complaining. I wouldn't use one, even if it

were there, as the ground floor is quite easy to move around in. Away from the crowd, you would lose the atmosphere that makes going so exciting. But while the floor is the place to be, it makes looking at the track hard, as excited punters can obscure the view. Luckily, there are screens around to make sure you never miss a thing.

You can eat at a variety of bars and restaurants, but the real lure is towards the track and the wildly gesticulating bookmakers standing by blackboards handling large amounts of cash. These are the men to see if you have confidence in a dog after you've studied the betting and the form sheet. I'm sure this science is meant to help the betting, but I'm not sure the information

written down always does!

After my study session, I pick my dogs, part with my cash and settle to cheer my canine friends home. "Settle" is perhaps the wrong word, as I become tense as the dogs enter the traps. When they leave, the volume explodes and everyone cheers on their dog, jumping about frantically. Luckily, my shouting works, and four of my dogs win, leaving me to collect a tidy sum from a disgruntled bookie. I just consider my good fortune a partial refund for years of losing.

Even if you don't want to wager any cash, a night at the dogs is still good fun. The speed of the dogs is exhilarating and you can get cheering without putting the bite on your wallet. Forget that whining lot in Albert Square – they're all barking.

## SOME HARE-RAISING FACTS

- Evening race meetings at Walthamstow Stadium are every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, £6 senior side, £3 junior side. Gates open at 6.30pm, with the first race starting at 7.30pm. Lunchtime meetings are on every Monday and Thursday at 1pm, admission free, tel: 020 8498 3300, website: [www.wsgreyhound.co.uk](http://www.wsgreyhound.co.uk)
- One of the sport's biggest legends, Mick the Miller, was named after the odd job man at

the vicarage where he was born and lived. The Irish legend nearly didn't make it onto the track at all, as he contracted distemper shortly before his first birthday. He recovered in the care of Arthur Callanan and went on to win 15 out of the 20 races he ran in Ireland as well as becoming a film star.

- Information on all aspects of dog racing is available from the British Greyhound Racing Board website: [www.thedogs.co.uk](http://www.thedogs.co.uk)

A day at the races: sprinting for the finishing line (*top*), and the inside of Walthamstow stadium (*above*), where the tension mounts.



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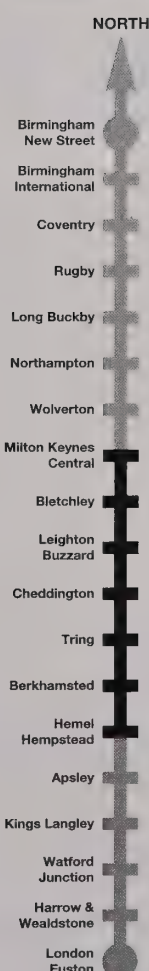
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ILLUSTRATION BY CLARE CURTIS

# Dear Ann We're living in a slum

- love and loneliness
- bereavement
- personal problems
- advice and support

Ann Dambrough, OBE, who is disabled herself, is co-author of the *Directory for Disabled People* and other guides. Write to her at *Disability Now*, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW or email your problem to [editor@disabilitynow.org.uk](mailto:editor@disabilitynow.org.uk)



I have had severe arthritis since I was 18 (I am now 38). It is a variable condition. I am sometimes able, sometimes not. I now live in a council house, have an adapted car and my husband as my carer.

The problem is he does not care for me in a way that is satisfactory to me. It is not that he is abusive; it is just that he is more interested in himself and is not very good at cleaning or getting meals ready on time. We have arguments if I bring up my dissatisfaction, but I am getting worn out and fed up with living in a slum.

Amy, Aylesbury

Have you been in touch with your social services department? It is important that you are in contact with a social worker who can advise you. You need to discuss two separate issues: the personal care you need and the help in the house. You may be able to get help with housework, but you might have to make a financial contribution depending on your means.

You could ask your social worker about aids and equipment so you can help a bit with cleaning and cooking.

It is important that disabled people have a clear say in their care, but when it is your partner who is doing the caring, he must also have a say. After all, your husband has a life to lead as well.

Rather than bringing up your dissatisfaction, it might be helpful to get your husband's views. And, of course, what about praising your husband for all he does for you? What does some dust here and there matter? Life is short.

## Hard work

I am leaving home to go to university in September. I have cerebral palsy, am partially sighted and have mobility difficulties. I have to be accompanied practically everywhere.

My problem is that I would like to get part-time work during vacations. I know from long and frustrating experience that this is very difficult. I have excellent people skills and am willing to fit in. I have a wide range of interests and a good academic record. Despite all this, employers seem to blanch at the mention of the word disabled. I cannot do manual work and, because of this, my job potential is not brilliant. I have done voluntary work – I worked for the local paper for years and have had experience in an old people's home.

I would like to be in touch with other disabled teenagers and hear what advice they might have. Have you any suggestions?

Noreen, Glasgow

I hope we shall hear from disabled teenagers who could share experiences.

Have you been in touch with your local Jobcentre Plus? You could be put in touch with a disability employment adviser who, I'm sure, you would find very helpful. As well as finding out about suitable work, you could also ask about the Access to Work programme. This provides practical aid and I have been assured that, where it is thought necessary, disabled people with mobility difficulties may be helped with funding for taxis. In such cases, the person would be required

to pay the difference between the cost of local transport and the cost of a taxi.

## Growing problems

Can you give me advice on setting up an old charity again? It is now called the Country Gardeners' Club and I want it to be aimed at people with disabilities and their supporters. At present, there is no committee and I am supporting it out of my pension.

I want to attract members so I can retire. What can I do?

Mr Penley, Essex

First of all, you do not say whether the old charity, presumably registered, was wound up or if it is still legally in existence. You may need to contact the Charity Commission to find out the status of the charity. If it is still in existence, have you informed the Charity Commission of the new name?

I suggest you contact Thrive, which provides a range of horticultural and gardening services. They have an excellent

website, and Tim Spurgeon tells me he would be glad to advise.

## Lonely heart

I am terribly lonely. I have no girlfriend and I don't know how to go on with things. I am tired and bored of being lonely. I can't get a job. I love motor vehicles.

Roddy, West Yorkshire

Most of us have been lonely at times, but for some people there seems no end. I am sure an end will come, but it does mean you will have to explore every opportunity and be prepared for disappointment.

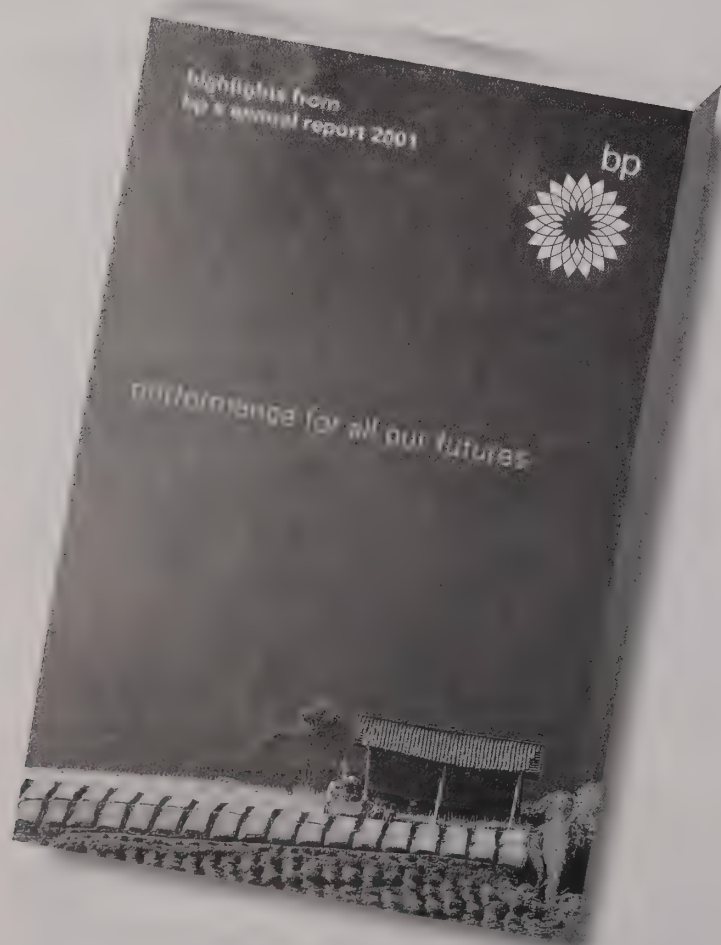
Are you in touch with your local disability organisation? Your library would give you details. They will have meetings and social events, and that would be a start. Are there any clubs for people who are interested in motor vehicles like you? It's worth going through the list of local organisations kept in your library.

Have you thought of getting a computer? Contact AbilityNet. They help disabled people learn about computers and advise on the most suitable models. Sometimes they are able to help with the cost. Once you can manage a computer, you could write letters and maybe get some penpals. You certainly wouldn't feel so isolated then.

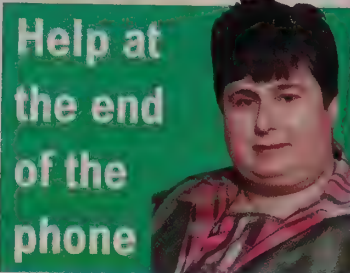
Regarding girlfriends, if you can get out and about a bit, you never know who you might meet. Don't give up.

AbilityNet, freephone: 0800 269545, email: [enquiries@abilitynet.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@abilitynet.co.uk), website: [www.abilitynet.co.uk](http://www.abilitynet.co.uk)

Thrive, The Geoffrey Udall Centre, Beech Hill, Reading RG7 2AT, tel: 01761 233540, [www.carryongardening.org.uk](http://www.carryongardening.org.uk)



If you would like to learn more about BP, please telephone our Distribution Services on 0870 241 3269 for a free copy of our audio cassette which gives highlights from our Annual Report 2001.



DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick gives disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Disabled herself, Lin is a psychotherapeutic counsellor and Methodist local preacher, with a postgraduate diploma in homeopathic medicine. If you have something you need to discuss in confidence, talk to her on Mondays 6pm-10pm and Thursdays 1pm-5pm, tel: 01787 882111.



# Reaping rewards

The annual Remap awards go to one-off devices that make a huge difference to peoples' lives, says Mary Wilkinson

**J**o-Jo Cranfield, aged nine, goes to and from school on an electric scooter, much to the envy of her friends.

"She won't let the others use it unless they've got one arm," laughs her mother Tina.

The arm extension that allows her to use the scooter, made by John Ralling of Remap's Southend panel, has won a prize in the charity's annual awards. Remap produces one-off devices which are not available commercially.

Jo-Jo's parents were desperate to get her mobile, and had already been misled into thinking a hospital would adapt a bike for her. At one of the many hospital appointments, Tina snapped: "There's a bike she can't ride. We need help."

Shortly afterwards, retired engineer John Ralling called round with a physiotherapist.

"All he had was a scrap of paper, a chewed pencil and a tape measure," said Tina. "We didn't think we'd see him again."

But in about a week, Jo-Jo

had an arm extension involving an oil filter case lined with carpet and a linkage attachment using parts borrowed from a friend in Formula Three motor racing. There was no charge.

Tina thinks the device can be used on other things, like a dolls' pram or, later, a shopping trolley, if the cup is enlarged. "John has made such a huge difference to Jo-Jo's life."

First place in this year's awards went to an emergency pram/pushchair braking system for a mother with epilepsy. If she lost control of the pram during a seizure, she wanted the brake to work automatically. By the time the Leeds-Bradford panel began work on a wrist cord-trigger mechanism, four others wanted one and now there are nine.

Other winners were a "jazzy" motorised buggy for two-year-old Jake Brierley who has spinal muscular atrophy (Derby & Burton panel); a wheelchair braking system for a man disabled by Thalidomide (West Kent panel); and a fork lift baby

buggy for a father with back problems (Derby & Burton).

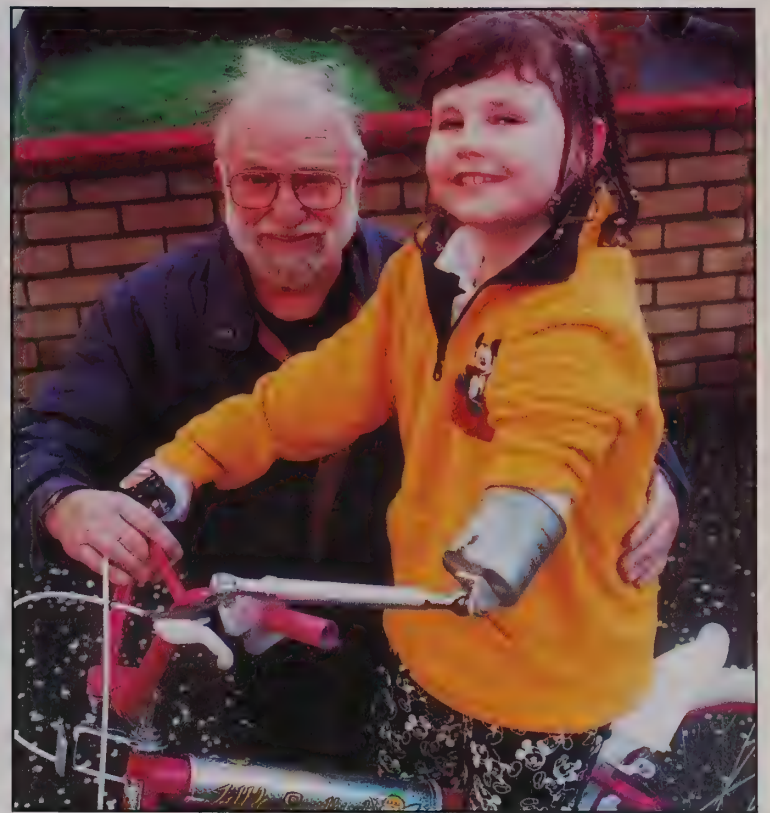
The award sponsored by Professor Heinz Wolff, chairman of the judges, went to a tool that lets a woman with limited hand function turn the knob on her washing machine (*below*).



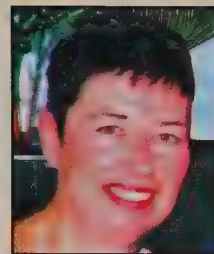
"A simple, individual device with no moving parts – most elegant simplicity," he said.

And the New Horizon award, which the judges thought had the most potential for wider use, went to a seat belt restrictor (Gloucestershire panel) for a young adult who has challenging behaviour and a "Houdini" ability to escape from commercial harnesses.

Remap, tel: 0845 130 0456, [www.remap.org.uk](http://www.remap.org.uk)



In control: Jo-Jo Cranfield and John Ralling try out the arm extension.



## Remap's new boss

Mary-Ann Mitchell, 48, is Remap's new national organiser from July. An ex-civil servant with management and charity experience, she will look at how Remap products might have a wider use, though she is "aware of the minefield around patents."

Outgoing organiser John Wright set up Remap's constitution 12 years ago and has seen 30,000 aids produced since then. "Remap is the most cost-effective charity for disabled people," he claims. But he says more volunteer panel members are needed to keep pace with the demand for one-off solutions.

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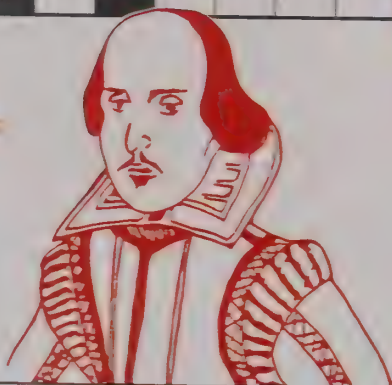
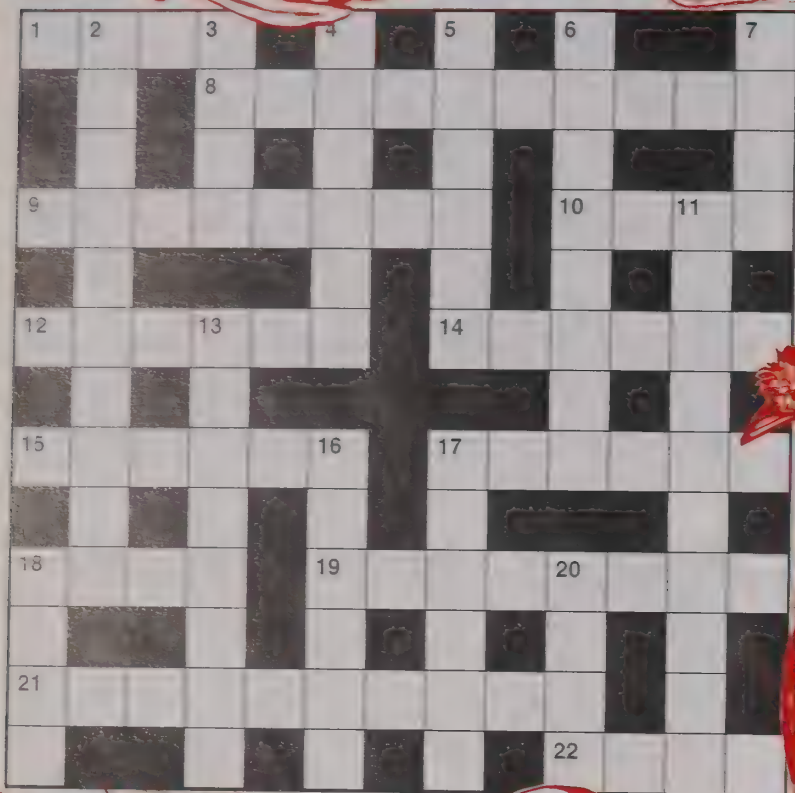
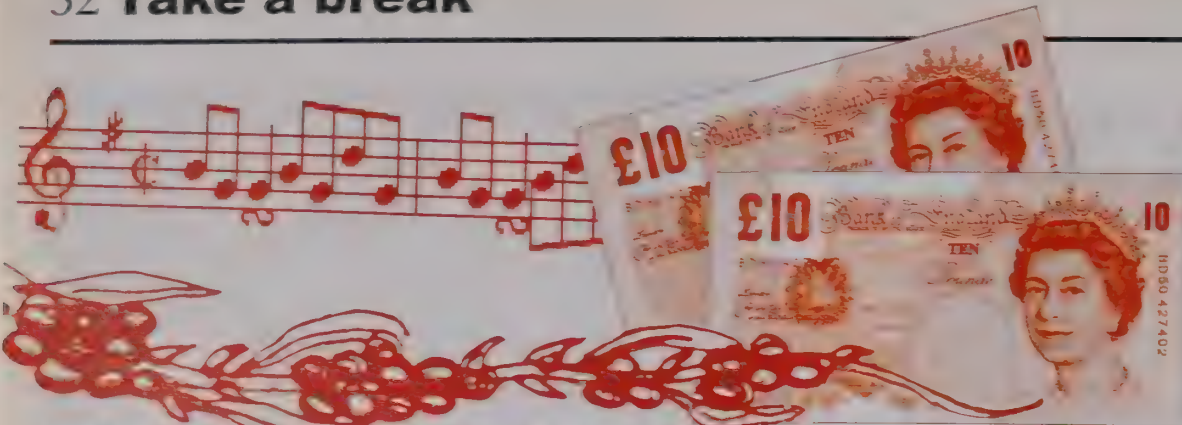
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### ACROSS

1. Stout pole used for a ship's mast (4)
8. Great eagerness (10)
9. Thorny shrub with small, dark, red berries (8)
10. Attempts to buy at an auction (4)
12. Sweetish, pulpy fruit in a thin, brown shell (6)
14. Landed property (6)
15. See 19 Across
17. Movable parts of helmets (6)
18. Shakespeare plays consist of five (4)
19. And 15 Across. These need to be protected both on the streets and in car parks (8,6)
21. Nagged and intimidated (10)
22. Long, deep cut (4)

### DOWN

2. Britain's 2004 \_\_\_\_\_ team has receive £1.7 million from UK Sport (10)
3. Money paid to live in a property (4)
4. Sudden, disabling attack (6)
5. Shade of meaning (6)
6. A recent report suggests the NHS is only training half the \_\_\_\_\_ specialists required (8)
7. Flightless, Australian birds (4)
11. Cleansing agents (10)
13. They are used for cutting metal (4-4)
16. Capital of New South Wales (6)
17. Goes to see (6)
18. Famous Swedish pop group (4)
20. Crosby, the famous crooner (4)

CROSSWORD BY JIM MCLAREN  
ILLUSTRATION BY JAMIE TROUNCE  
ANSWERS ON PAGE 34

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## Candid Dan



A second wedding for Dan. Will his be next?

For the second time in six weeks I've donned a best man's suit. This time on home soil and for Dave, marrying my long time pal Denise.

Although there were no tides from the Greek waters in the background as at Winz's intimate gathering, a sea of 150 plus familiar faces greeted me. Just the thing for pre-speech nerves.

Looking after Dave was a breeze. There was none of the insanity or lairy suits that came with Winz. My main duty was to stop Dave running himself into the ground and to provide a calming presence. I managed this, but think the champagne quaffed in the limo en route to the church had as much influence as my soothing words.

The ceremony was traditional, but the bride's sense of humour was evident through the hymns chosen, drawing knowing smiles between us. The first one shared its music with the Dambusters theme, while another had a few mouthing 'you're not singing anymore' to it as if at the World Cup.

Then the meal and speeches. With me "last up", my nerves were jangling when I stepped up to address the aircraft hangar full in front of me. For the second speech in a row I wowed the audience, though not always as rehearsed.

The evening bash was always going to be lively. It didn't disappoint, with the hall turning into a hybrid made up of a food mountain and a brewery. I turned into a sausage-eating dancing machine, swigging a beer or three until I spotted my favourite poison behind the bar. Wish I could remember what happened after that.

Sitting among my fellow casualties in the hotel bar the next day while watching the World Cup final, it was obvious far too much of a good time had been had by all. While Ronaldo hoisted the trophy, we struggled to raise our tea cups. I wish my friends would stop getting married. All this fun's getting too much.



# INDEPENDENCE DAY

**The Independent Living Show London** will be held at Wembley Conference and Exhibition Centre, 18-19 September. This year's show features for the first time an association and charity village, where over 16 national charities, including Scope, the MS Society and Incontact, will be on hand to discuss membership benefits and services they offer. Also new for this year is the lifestyle activity theme running through the show, with chances to test out new equipment and find out information.

There's also the chance to go on a sensory journey at

the ROMPA stand (A429), or if you want to find a different way to soothe aches and pains, you can follow the complimentary therapy trail. If the strains of negotiating the stalls gets too much, you could sample an Indian neck, head or shoulder massage or some reflexology in the relaxation zone, or borrow a manual or powered wheelchair from stand A112 in hall 1 or stand B320 in hall 2.

If you fancy making new friends, internet dating website [4dpttogether.com](http://4dpttogether.com) have a singles bar where you can stop by and have a drink. And don't forget, you

can meet members of the DN team at stand B40.

Gowring's Mobility are providing a courtesy service on adapted shuttle buses for show visitors travelling into stations near Wembley, so there's no need to be stuck for a ride. Free parking is available for blue and orange badge holders.

Tickets are free, tel: 0870 429 4372, website: [www.independentlivingevents.co.uk](http://www.independentlivingevents.co.uk)

Places on the Gowrings Mobility courtesy buses need to be booked in advance, tel: 0845 608 802, [www.gowringsmobility.co.uk/courtesy](http://www.gowringsmobility.co.uk/courtesy)

## What's on

**The Jennifer Trust for Spinal Muscular Atrophy** will hold its Annual National Conference, 30 August-1 September, the Ettington Chase Conference Centre. The event is aimed at people with spinal muscular atrophy and people working with them, and brings together leading professionals in SMA care and management. It will include workshops and seminars on various issues around spinal muscular atrophy. Contact Heather Brown, tel: 01789 267520.

**Incontact** will hold their annual conference, 4-5 September, University of Derby. The conference will feature information and advice for anyone with continence-related issues, including treatment and cure, products and management and consumer involvement and support. There is also a programme of workshops which will look at areas including skin care and clothing, stress incontinence, alternative therapies and the future for treatment. Tel: 0870 770 3246, email: [info@incontact.org](mailto:info@incontact.org)

**The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)** will hold Breaking the Sound Barrier, 18-19 October, Business Design Centre, Islington, London. The event will feature an interactive technology zone which will feature live demonstrations of existing and upcoming gadgets, and an information communication technology area. There will also be a

communication workshop room, employment, skills and learning surgeries and tips on how to make your home more accessible for deaf people. Textphone: 0808 808 9000, tel: 0808 808 0123.

**The Royal College of Art** will hold Include 2003, 25-28 March 2003. Leading people in the area of inclusive design will discuss topics including fashion, transport, domestic interiors and workplace design. Papers reflecting the latest thinking and practice in the inclusive design field are invited, with those accepted to be put onto a CD that will accompany a book containing selected papers from the 2001 conference. The deadline for submission of abstracts is 30 September, with finished papers to be submitted by 17 January 2003. Website: [www.hhrc.rca.ac.uk/events/include2003/index.html](http://www.hhrc.rca.ac.uk/events/include2003/index.html) email: [include@rca.ac.uk](mailto:include@rca.ac.uk)

**The Personal Safety Training Team of The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability** will hold Violence and Aggression Awareness for Public Sector Employees, 1 October, London. The conference will look at issues surrounding the increase of violence within society, and whether the government's Zero Tolerance campaign is having any effect as a deterrent on reducing interpersonal crime. £195 plus VAT. Contact the Conference co-ordinator, tel: 020 8780 4500 Ext 5236.

## Website

**Shape**, the arts organisation that works with disabled, deaf and elderly people, have launched their new website. It will feature news on forthcoming training workshops, educational and participatory events and future special events, and there are plans to advertise job vacancies. Website: [www.shapearts.org.uk](http://www.shapearts.org.uk)

## FocusAbility

### Wakefield District Day for Disabled People Annual Exhibition

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Find us online at [www.focusability.org](http://www.focusability.org)

## DN WEBSITE UPDATE

The DN website discussion forum has been improved. To make it easier and quicker to communicate with other DN readers, we now have 16 forums covering:

access • arts • communication • education • employment • equipment/technology • finance • health & disabilities • international topics • legislation • leisure • politics • social issues • sport • transport & parking • other topics.

So, why not visit and have your say!

## DID YOU KNOW?

DN is available on tape, disk and by e-mail. Contact Talking Newspapers, see Imprint, page 2.

## ATTENTION

DN cannot guarantee inclusion in a particular issue. Due to deadlines, please send details at the earliest opportunity.

If you would like your event listed here, please send details to the address on page 2.

## Computer manual

**The Windows without a mouse guide** is a downloadable PDF manual which contains keyboard shortcuts for windows software that can be used by people who find using a mouse with their computer difficult. Areas looked at include system focus and navigation, windows explorer, functions in internet explorer and outlook express, the desktop and widgets. Website: <http://www-users.cs.york.ac.uk/~alistair/MouselessManual.pdf>



## Profile:

### Henry Longley

d.o.b: 20.05.2001

Henry is a bright, happy child with a lively facial expression. He has been with his foster carers since August 2001. They describe him as a pleasure to care for.

As a neo-natal Henry contracted Group B Strep. meningitis and septicaemia. This resulted in brain damage. He also experienced seizures in the newborn period. He has not suffered from seizures since.

It is uncertain whether Henry will be able to sit unaided. He has variable muscle tone and cerebral palsy. Henry vocalises, but shows no sign of speech.

**Ethnic/Racial Origins:**  
White English.

**Family Needed:** An adoptive family who is totally at ease with his disability.

**Contact:** Possibility of letterbox contact with birth parents.

**Allowances:** An adoption allowance may be payable.

**Legal Status:** Accommodated. His parents agree with the adoption plan.

**Contact:**  
Anne-Marie Dawson  
Tel: 01444 446576  
Fax: 01444 446568  
at West Sussex  
Social Services,  
4 Orchard Way,  
EAST GRINSTEAD,  
West Sussex.  
RH19 1AS.







• Recruitment (on pages 35 to 38)

# Decisive action on the quality of decision-making

## Chair and Members

JobCentre Plus, The Pension Service and the Disability & Carer's Service Standards Committee

The Joint Standards Committee is an independent advisory group – formed by the Chief Executives of JobCentre Plus, The Pension Service and the Disability & Carer's Service – it exists to help the respective boards of directors monitor and improve standards of decision-making in the fields of benefits and employment. There are currently six vacancies on the Committee – for five ordinary Members and a person qualified to act as Chair.

As a Member, you will need to have a number of years' experience of providing advice, products or services to customers who receive, or are eligible for state benefits or advice on employment, retirement and disability issues. You will have liaised with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and its Agencies on a range of issues and are likely to have acted on behalf of benefits recipients or provided dedicated advice to specific groups. Alternatively, you may have been involved in public or voluntary schemes to assist groups in receipt of state benefits.

For the Chair's role, we are looking for extensive experience of senior management in a large public, private or voluntary-sector organisation that provides products or services to the public. You will be experienced at measuring or assessing performance and then interpreting the data in order to make recommendations for improvement. As well as ideally having a good knowledge of the state benefit system and the current welfare-reform agenda, you will be experienced at chairing senior management meetings and will have produced reports for consideration at executive level.

Members are required to serve an average of two days each month and are remunerated at the rate of £300 per day. The Chair receives £500 a day, but is expected to devote an average of three days each month to the Committee. Meetings are normally held in London and Leeds but visits to other locations may be necessary.

[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)

**DWP** | Department for Work & Pensions



For further details and an application form (to be returned by 9th August 2002), please visit our website to download an application pack at [www.capitaras.co.uk](http://www.capitaras.co.uk) or alternatively, write to Capita RAS, Innovation Court, New Street, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 7JB or telephone 01325 745170 (24 hours) or fax 01256 383787. Please quote reference: B6661.

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Brighton, Sussex 13/14 September 2002 – 'Dyspraxia – Theory into Practice' Two-day professional conference. Keynote speakers: Dr Alex Richardson and Prof. David Sugden. Workshops, exhibition and lunch. £190 (£180 DF member). Conference Dinner (optional). Contact Dyspraxia Foundation, 8 West Alley, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1EG, telephone: 01462 455016 or email: [admin@dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk](mailto:admin@dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk)

### • Personal

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potentia dw

**Disability Wales** is the national disability association in Wales campaigning for rights, equality, and inclusion of disabled people. **Potentia DW** is an initiative funded by the Welsh Development Agency and the European Regional Development Fund. This 3-year project which provides enterprise support for disabled people in Wales is seeking to recruit to the following posts. **Closing date for all posts:** Friday 16th August 2002.

### Disability Wales is working to become an Organisation of Disabled People

#### Project Manager

**Salary:** NJC Scale P02 £23451 to £25473

**Hours:** 35 per week

For this post you will require experience of managing projects within a voluntary organisation. Experience of financial control and knowledge of the barriers faced by disabled people seeking self-employment are essential. The successful candidate will be able to present information clearly and will be adaptable and committed to team working.

#### Project Training Officer

**Salary:** NJC Scale S01/S02 £19770 to £22971 (pay review pending).

**Hours:** 35 per week

You will be developing and delivering training packages around Wales. It is essential that you have experience of assessing training needs and developing accessible training courses.

#### Project Administrator

**Salary:** NJC Scale 4 £13764 to £15342 (pay review pending)

**Hours:** 35 per week

You will be providing support to the Potentia Facilitator to ensure the smooth operation of the Admin function for the Project. Experience of all aspects of office work, and the ability to work independently to meet deadlines, is essential.

#### Regional Client Advisors

**Earnable Fees:** £150 per client session plus retainer fee of £400 pcm

Responsible to the Project Director for providing direct advice and support to disabled people setting up a new business. Based in different locations around Wales, you will have knowledge of your local business services and will have an understanding of the barriers faced by disabled people wishing to become self employed. Successful candidates will be offered a contract on a self-employed basis.

- Ability to travel extensively throughout Wales
- Knowledge of the Welsh language is desirable

Application packs are available from Potentia DW, Werddu Court, Caerphilly Business Park, Van Road, Caerphilly, CF83 3ED or call **029 2085 3175** (use announcer for minicom), fax us on **029 2088 8702** or E-mail [potentia@dwac.demon.co.uk](mailto:potentia@dwac.demon.co.uk) Please let us know if you require the information in e-form, Welsh, Braille or on disk or tape. For an informal chat about these jobs before applying, please contact Mik Standing or Linda Smith as above.

## Put Best Value at the heart of London's development

**LONDON**  
DEVELOPMENT  
AGENCY

### Best Value Co-ordinator Band 5 £27,500 - £34,500 p.a.

As one of four functional bodies of the GLA, the London Development Agency exists to support the capital's growth and prosperity. Our vital remit extends from driving economic development and regeneration to promoting business investment, employment and working to support London's continuing renewal as a vibrant and inclusive city.

As a high profile agency, with public accountability, Best Value is at the heart of everything we do. To ensure that we are achieving our full potential in this area, we are now looking for a Best Value Co-ordinator who can spearhead the BV Review and inspection process and provide a key source of advice to colleagues across the organisation. This key role will see you leading on the BV Performance Plan and collating internal and external contributions, and supporting the development of the Corporate Plan and Annual Report.

This level of responsibility demands someone of degree calibre, with at least 3 years' experience of performance management in the public or private sector, and an understanding of reporting systems. To this, you'll need to add demonstrable skills in relationship management, planning, performance monitoring and project and process management. Influential, analytical and full of initiative, you'll also be committed to achieving results.

Find out more about this exciting opportunity by visiting our website at [www.lda.gov.uk](http://www.lda.gov.uk) or emailing us on [recruitment@lda.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@lda.gov.uk) or, alternatively call us on 020 7954 4529. Please quote reference SDI32. Alternative formats are available on request.

Closing date: 12 August 2002.

**LDA is an equal opportunities employer and actively encourages applications from all sectors of the community. All disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the posts will be invited to interview.**

**The LDA was set up in July 2000 as the economic development organisation of the Mayor of London and one of the nine regional development agencies in England.**

## DIRECTOR

**Lewisham Disability Coalition • Salary Scale: 29k-31k - inc. I.L.W.**

The Lewisham Disability Coalition is a new voluntary organisation seeking to actively promote 'Independence, Inclusion and Integration' for all disabled people in the London Borough of Lewisham. It will influence and contribute to policy and strategies that impact on the lives of disabled people and provide information, advice and support focussing on income maximisation, employment and training opportunities.

The Director will be responsible for the implementation of its strategic priorities, in conjunction with the Management Committee and staff, as well as the day-to-day running of the charity.

The ideal candidate for this challenging and exciting position will have a minimum of three years experience at a senior level of the following: Project Management, Staff Selection & Training, Budget Management & Financial Control, Networking & Fundraising.

A motivated, self-starter, educated to degree or equivalent level, the applicant should have the ability to communicate with a diverse range of people and organisations and should be fully committed to equality of opportunity and the promotion of diversity.

A comprehensive knowledge of disability and related issues coupled with a commitment to the empowerment of disabled people are prerequisites of the job as much of the work will involve seeking to influence the policies and agendas of local statutory and non-statutory agencies through networking and building positive relationships within the London Borough of Lewisham.

**For an information pack please send an A4 s.a.e. quoting appropriate reference to:**

Spooner Associates, Suite 104, 99-103 Lomond Grove, London SE5 7HN

CVs will NOT be considered

Deadline for all applications: September 6th 2002

Funded by the London Borough of Lewisham

Reference: DIR/G



## SPINAL INJURIES ASSOCIATION

### INDEPENDENT LIVING ADVOCATE

£18,000 - £22,000 per annum pro rata  
(21 hours per week)

Due to the generosity of The Rank Foundation, an exciting new opportunity has arisen for a disabled person to contribute to the work of the Spinal Injuries Association, the national charity for spinal cord injured people and their families

An Independent Living Advocate is required to undertake work on a new Youth Independence Project, helping young people under 25 and their families deal with the range of issues that arise following the onset of spinal cord injury. The Advocate will be paralysed themselves and have personal knowledge of the challenges facing young spinal cord injured people

Working alongside the other members of the Helpline Team in the SIA Office in North London, the Advocate will advise on youth issues and will also support young people who are treated on childrens' wards in general hospitals by establishing links with paediatric services

This is a challenging post for an outgoing and enthusiastic young person with an interest in disability issues and advocacy. For a Job Information Pack, contact Nicola at SIA on 020 8444 2121 or email her at [nicolaw@spinali.demon.co.uk](mailto:nicolaw@spinali.demon.co.uk)

Closing date for completed applications

31st August 2002

## DEADLINES

**September 2002 classified deadlines: Booking: 16 August. Copy: 20 August.**



• Recruitment (on pages 35 to 38)

At DFID, our central focus is on an international commitment to halving the number of people in extreme poverty by 2015 - through sustainable development, education, and better management of natural and physical environments. So we're looking for individuals who can bring skills, understanding and patience to even the most complex development activities.

In the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes, continuing political turmoil, bad government and war have critically undermined the establishment of development partnerships and poverty reduction. Ongoing armed conflict has had a devastating effect upon the lives of millions of Africans - with some populations living in the worst socio-economic conditions in the world. In the face of this, and of our commitment to poverty reduction, we're strengthening our focus on assisting the ordinary civilians caught up in conflict and poverty as much as possible - from supporting demobilisation programmes to restoring basic service provision and economic support to destitute civilians. Work on conflict has also been given new emphasis through the G8 Action Plan for Africa.

### Senior Conflict Adviser

£43,955 - £59,105

UK

You will head our Africa Conflict Team, lending your significant experience of African conflict and related humanitarian emergencies to policy, programme and funding issues - supporting conflict resolution and post-conflict regeneration activities. This means you'll maintain a watching brief and prepare analysis and advice on conflicts - visiting the area as necessary - and focusing specifically, but not exclusively, on Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. It's also about successful interagency and intra-agency liaison - making sure the best results come from your relationships with Whitehall and the DFID team. Policy development is also within your remit - and you'll look at peace-building, demobilisation and reintegration, small arms and security sector reform, conflict assessments, peace-keeping and post-conflict reconstruction, leading both your team and a cross-DFID network.

Field experience will be invaluable - and your awareness of policy and practice must be extensive. You'll also understand the complexities of the international system of conflict prevention and crisis response, including the workings of the UN and the EU. You'll offer a strong network of contacts in Africa and internationally.

### Conflict Adviser

£36,411 - £48,783

UK

You'll work towards a more co-ordinated approach to conflict resolution - and offer advice on this, peace-keeping and post-conflict reconstruction to the cross-departmental Africa Conflict Prevention Pool.

This co-ordination will encompass preparing policy briefs, updating the Secretary of State and other officials, and keeping an overview of funding issues - as well as helping integrate conflict prevention and peace-building into country programmes through strategy documents and written briefs. Of course, day-to-day management and support for the Africa Conflict Team will also be your responsibility - and your skills in relationship-building will facilitate liaison with Whitehall, DFID colleagues, and non-governmental bodies.

Peace-keeping and building, mediation, demobilisation and reintegration, and post-conflict resolution will all be areas within your expertise - and you'll combine these with a sound appreciation of the workings of DFID and our international role. You will also offer field experience of African conflict and development issues - as well as knowledge of the international system of conflict prevention and crisis response, including the UN and the EU.



Department for International Development

www.dfid.gov.uk

### Humanitarian Adviser

£36,411 - £48,783

UK (and extensive travel to Africa)

Historically, we have been a major provider of humanitarian assistance in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes - spending over £500 million in the last ten years. Through this, we've offered, and continue to offer, emergency and rehabilitation assistance, a wide range of professional expertise, and develop and implement related support strategies. You'll take a lead on our policies and strategies - additionally contributing, as required, to the West and North Africa Department - assessing conflicts and advising on our position and response. Simply, you'll make sure the most urgent humanitarian needs are met. You'll also monitor humanitarian activities to identify their quality and impact, making sure relations with other agencies are constructive, and keep us at the forefront of humanitarian thinking and strategising.

Knowledge and experience of African relief and rehabilitation programme development and management will naturally underpin all your activities. And you'll have held high-level responsibility for such activities in the past. Longer-term knowledge of Africa is also important - specifically of the humanitarian and political contexts in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes area. You may also have a background working with donors - or of planning and implementing emergency and rehabilitation activities.

Whichever role you take on, your personal skills will enhance your professional understanding. And as a reflection of the complexity and sensitivity of these activities, you'll offer strong communication and relationship-building skills, and strengths in analysis. Further, you'll not only lead people successfully but you'll perform well as part of a team too - while retaining the abilities needed to work independently. Finally, you'll offer an understanding of multilateral institutions and recognise the need continually to find innovative solutions to multifaceted and unusual problems. You should possess a good relevant post-graduate degree or equivalent professional qualification.

In all cases, you may be entitled to a relocation grant of £5000. New entrants would be expected to start at the minimum of the quoted salary scale.

DFID is an equal opportunities employer. Applications are welcomed from all parts of the community. Selection is on merit. To work for us, you must be a national of a member state of the European Economic Area, a citizen of the British Commonwealth with the established right to live and work in the UK, or have been granted refugee status (as defined by the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees) by the UK authorities.

For more information on this vacancy, DFID in general, and an electronic application form, visit our website. Alternatively, call 0207 023 0079 or e-mail f-bush@dfid.gov.uk to request an application pack - quoting Ref: EOP 0103 453308 001A.

Closing date - 9 August 2002.

## CIVIL SERVICE

### DISABILITY AND ACCESS OFFICER

£25,900 - 29,763 per annum

The Museum considers access as a priority for its future strategy. This new post will co-ordinate activities across the Museum to develop both targeted and inclusive provision for people with disabilities across a range of audiences including children, young people, adults and family members, culturally diverse communities and the socially excluded. You will be the leading authority on disability access issues in the Museum and whilst based in the Learning and Visitor Services Division, your work will involve extensive cross Museum co-ordination and work with external agencies.

You will need to understand the barriers to access for people with disabilities, communicate and empathise with a diverse range of people and influence change within the Museum. Knowledge of relevant legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Act and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, as well as proven experience of working effectively in this field is also required. You should be educated to degree level in a relevant subject or equivalent and have the ability to turn ideas into action. Experience of working within Museums or similar institutions is desirable but not essential.

All applicants with a disability who can show that they meet the minimum essential specification will be selected for interview.

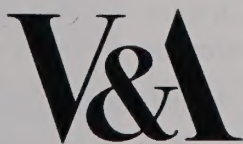
For further details and an application form, please send a postcard quoting reference DAO1 to Karen Levin, Personnel Department, Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, London SW7 2RL or email: K.Levin@vam.ac.uk

CV's will not be accepted.

Closing date: 6 September 2002.

www.vam.ac.uk

The V&A is devoted to enabling everyone to enjoy and explore its collections and the cultures that created them, while inspiring contemporary design.



### West Midlands Disability Arts Forum

WMDAF is a user led organisation run by and for disabled people. It promotes disability art and culture and aims to increase disabled peoples participation in the arts as artists, audiences and employees.

Administrator - Permanent position

This is a part time post - 20 hrs per week with a salary from £12,000 pro rata. Applications are particularly welcome from disabled people.

Wmdaf is seeking an organised, flexible, self-starter with good office skills. The Administrator will be a key player in the development of WMDAF and the delivery of its services. The successful applicant will enjoy a varied and challenging role carrying out a range of tasks.

For a job application pack please contact WMDAF, Unit 18, The Custard Factory, Gibb St, Birmingham, B9 4AA. If you wish to speak to Alan or Mary about the post please call 0121 242 2248 or minicom 0121 242 2240 or email info@wmdaf.org

Deadline for applicants Friday 16th August 2002

WMDAF is funded by West Midlands Arts

## COURSES

To advertise your vacancies or courses please contact Richard, tel:

020 7619 7336, or Patrick, tel: 020 7619 7320, or contact them both on fax:

020 7619 7331, minicom: 020 7619 7332. They can go on the web as well!

### ROYAL DEESIDE SCOTLAND

NEW for 2002. 4 superb self catering cottages located on the banks of the river next to Balmoral. Designed and equipped to the highest standard with state of the art facilities for people with disabilities, their families and friends. Please contact: CRATHIE OPPORTUNITY HOLIDAYS Tel: 013397 42100 for more details or email: info@crathieholidays.org.uk www.crathieholidays.org.uk

### PENROSE BURDEN NORTH CORNWALL "Holiday Care Award Winners"

Holiday Cottages designed for wheelchair users and their families. Rural setting with superb views. Dogs welcome. Wood burning stoves and daily meal service. Please ring or write for colour brochure. R&N Hall, Penrose Burden, St Breward, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 4LZ. Telephone Bodmin (01208) 850277 or 850617

• Holidays

### Caribbean, St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

Fully wheelchair accessible, spacious, self-catering apartment with a stunning 'take your breath away' view of the sea and a chain of islands, including the famous Mustique. Large garden area and free seasonal organic food. Wheelchair accessible van also available for use. Apartment sleeps 2 to 4 and has a wheel-in shower and toilet. Activities include accessible beach, coral reef scuba / snorkelling, sailing and mountain and volcano treks. Open all year. Contact Don on 01865 724542 or email donboy667@hotmail.com

COME TO SUNNY JAVEA ON THE COSTA BLANCA SPAIN. FOUR BEDROOM WHEELCHAIR FRIENDLY VILLA. TWO BATHROOMS INCLUDING WHEEL-IN SHOWER, GARDEN, EXCELLENT SHARED SWIMMING POOL. TEL: 01562 885403

### COSTA DEL SOL

Wheelchairs, Electric scooters, bath & WC seats, commodes and more for hire T: 01375 377246 F: 01375 405861



www.mobilityabroad.co.uk

### Norfolk, Nar Valley Holiday Cottages

3 self-catering, all wheelchair accessible, 1 with wheel-in shower room, 2 with airbaths. Mostly en-suite. On working farm - peaceful location, central for beaches and tourist attractions. Indoor heated swimming pool. Also B&B. More details and prices, contact: Rosemary on 01760 338797.

### 10 MINUTES FROM DISNEYLAND

Florida villa owned by paraplegic. Sleeps up to 12, fully accessible and large. King size bed with ensuite bathroom, we and wheel-in shower. Large pool with water operated seat for a disabled person. A holiday you can take with confidence. Contact John Gillett on: 01179 698770.

### ALGARVE - PORTUGAL

Lots of villas, farmhouses, bungalows, hotels, B&B, car hire with hand controls, adapted vans and plenty to see and do. Contact: David Player Tel: 00 351 289 393636 Fax: 00 351 289 397448 E-mail: dave@player.pt

www.player.pt

Brittany Cottage to let. Fully adapted for wheelchair use. Good access to beaches. Sleeps up to 6. Details C. Hodgson. Tel (01924) 499220.

### WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE HOLIDAY COTTAGE IN RURAL FRANCE

Charming cottage in Dordogne region available for rent. Reasonable rates. If you are looking for peace and quiet, warm weather, good food and wine, this is the place for you. Book now for 2002. Call or fax Ed Passant on 0208 885 4971 or e-mail: ed.passant@mail.com web: www.accessholidays.com

CUMBRIA Idyllic & peaceful beauty spot. The Tranquil Otter Lakeshore Lodges 5 cosy lodges (1 accessible), 2 luxury lodges (both accessible) with accessible sauna, whirlpool bath, log burner etc. Lakeside paths, lake (via wheely boat) and shop all accessible. Resident Otters. Own rowing boat. 01228 576661. www.the-tranquil-otter.co.uk

Willow Cottage - The Black Isle, 5 mins drive Inverness. Beautifully equipped, Tourist Board 3 stars with Disability Award 2. 1 double, 1 twin, both ensuite. Situated on a working croft amid lovely scenery with wildlife park close by. Moray Firth dolphins, kites, buzzards, deer etc, and our Nessie! Inverness offers good food, cinema, theatre etc. Brochure/details, tel: 01463 731455, website: www.hilandisabledcottageholidays.co.uk

### JERSEY

LA ROCCO SELF-CATERING APARTMENTS Offering panoramic views over St Ouen's Bay. New apartments with disabled facilities, accommodating 2-8 persons. For free brochure: tel: 01534 743378, fax: 01534 746844, e-mail: larocco@localdial.com website: http://jerseyisland.com/stbrelade/larocco



**ADULT CARE**

From the 1st June 2002, we have formed an integrated Health and Social Care Community Service. To complete our enthusiastic and committed management team, we're looking for like minded individuals looking for the opportunity, not only of influencing the way this organisation develops, but also the national agenda as we form one of the demonstrator sites for the Care Trust developments.

## Community Services Manager - Physical Disabilities

• £29,133 - £31,254

Pivotal to the development of our integrated service - this new post represents our commitment to a strategy that promotes the social model of disability by working in partnership with users, carers and fellow professionals.

Using your knowledge and experience to combine our present service provision in Health and Social Services into an integrated cohesive service within the principles of Best Value and best practice, you'll have the vision to review and innovate our present approach to this sector of the service. With a proven track record in organisational development and change management, your experience should include working within the field of physical disability and a thorough grasp of the issues for users of the service.

We'd particularly like to hear from people from a social care background and, those with experience in a health setting to maintain the skill mix within the team.

In return for your energy, enthusiasm and commitment, you'll have a real chance to influence the organisation's development and work in an environment that seeks to evidence and introduce best practice. Access to appropriate transport is necessary for which a user allowance is payable. Relocation, car lease/loan schemes are available in approved cases.

If successful for this position, you'll be expected to apply for a Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau.

For an application pack, please contact Social Services Personnel, County Hall, Trowbridge BA14 8LE, tel: 01225 713977 (24-hour answerphone), quoting ref: SSA/120.

Closing date: 9th August 2002.

Kennet and North Wiltshire **NHS**  
Primary Care Trust

Wiltshire County Council provides a wide range of public services to improve the quality of life for Wiltshire people.

Proud of our reputation for innovation, we want to employ individuals who care about the County and about the people who live and work here.



Committed to equality of opportunity. All applicants will be selected on their merits. We promote flexible working patterns and will consider job sharing.

**Wiltshire**  
COUNTY COUNCIL



## Children Fund Project Worker

We are looking for an energetic motivated Project Worker to join deafconnect, the postholder will visit all schools in Northamptonshire to give basic communication skills, BSL and deaf awareness training to staff and pupils and work with parents linking with our existing Family and Children's service.

**Salary £18,000-£19,000 Full time (37 hrs per week)  
depending on experience and qualifications  
This is a 2 YEAR POST ONLY.**

You must:

- Hold a teaching qualification (e.g. 7307 part 1)
- Be familiar with teaching BSL
- Have experience of teaching Deaf Awareness
- Be able to use BSL to at least Stage 2 OR be a native BSL user
- Have a good understanding of Deaf issues, Deaf Culture and the Deaf Community
- Be able/familiar with working with children, preferably between the ages of 5 to 15
- Have access to a Car

Funded by



Children's Fund

For an Application form please apply to deafconnect, Green St, Northampton NN1 1SY

For more information on the post or an informal discussion please contact Mrs Lesley Knight, Director at the above address or phone 01604 250303 (voice) 01604 636828 (text)

**CLOSING DATE 9th August 2002**

Interviews to take place around the 23rd August 2002.

deafconnect is working towards Equal opportunities  
[www.deafconnect.org.uk](http://www.deafconnect.org.uk)

Tower Hamlets is a distinctive, unique London Borough that is home to a diverse vibrant, multicultural community. As part of an exciting regeneration programme, we aim to improve the quality of life for all who live and work in the area. It's also an ideal opportunity to further your career.

## Social Services

## Team Manager

Physical Disabilities Team

£30,353 - £32,493

The Physical Disabilities Team undertakes Borough-wide Assessments, Care Plans, Monitoring and Reviews for over 700 users of the service.

A Fast Response Duty/Assessment Group handles the screening and initial assessment of approximately 35 new referrals per month, presenting the initial outcome to a Referrals Action Group consisting of colleagues from Occupational Therapy, Housing, Hospitals, and other Health colleagues including the Disability Options Team. The Team consists of a Senior Practitioner, 6.5 w.t.e. Care Managers and Team Admin Workers.

The Team are about to be re-located, together with the Sensory Disability Team, Advocacy Services and short-term Emergency, Assessment, and Residential Respite Facilities at the Disability Resource Centre for Adults, near Mile End Station, which also houses the Disabilities Information Training Opportunities (D.I.T.O.) and a Café with Internet access.

If you need more information on these significant developments, contact Stewart Robertson, Principal Manager on 020 7364 6605.

Ref: PD/2

Closing date: Monday 12 August 2002.

For an application pack, please call 020 7364 4488 (24 Hour recruitment Line). A special Minicom service is available for those with a hearing or speech impairment on 020 7364 4489. Please quote the appropriate reference number.

We shall ensure fairness and equal opportunities throughout our workforce and in service delivery. We welcome applicants from suitably skilled candidates regardless of ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, religion or age.

A Workforce to Reflect the Community, Committed to Positive Action.

[www.towerhamlets.gov.uk](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk)



**Director  
Hammersmith and Fulham  
Action on Disability**  
36 hours  
c £30,000

**Hafad**

HAFAD is one of London's leading disability organisations and has been at the cutting edge of the disability movement since 1979. Due to the appointment of the organisation's current Director to a senior position, a major opportunity has arisen to advance your management career as a disabled person. You will need strategic vision and a commitment to equality and rights, a proven track record as a motivated leader with the ability to positively influence policy and practice as well as manage a diverse staff team. HAFAD can offer you a competitive salary, contributory pension scheme and independent management mentoring as well as a real chance to advance equality for disabled people in Hammersmith & Fulham.

For further details and an application pack (please state format) e-mail [info@hafad.fsworld.co.uk](mailto:info@hafad.fsworld.co.uk) or ring Rosario on 020 7431 8510 Text phone 0206109696 or write to HAFAD, the Greswell Centre, Greswell Street, London SW6 6PX.

Applications to be received by Wednesday 7th August  
Interviews to be held in the week beginning 19th August

**"I'd like to work with children"**

**"I need to recruit staff."**

Click on:

**www.ChildcareJobs.co.uk**

**...the direct connection to jobs in the childcare sector**



# TALKING TAPES

MAGMILLAN AUDIO BOOKS

AN INSPECTOR MORSE MYSTERY  
**COLIN DEXTER**  
THE DAUGHTERS OF CAIN  
READ BY  
KEVIN WHATELY



It's the holiday season and many of us will soon be setting off by air, road or train to pastures new for a few weeks at least! What better way to while away those tedious traffic jams or delays due to air traffic control than to listen to a good old fashioned story, especially when it is brilliantly read by a well known actor?

Macmillan Audio Books was launched in 1995 and is proud to publish some of the best-selling crime authors in the UK today in audio book format.

Their authors include Colin Dexter (creator of the sadly missed Inspector Morse), Agatha Christie, Peter Robinson, Sue Grafton, Ken Follett, Wilbur Smith, Minette Walters, Jackie Collins, Colin Forbes, Clare Francis and James Herbert, to name just a few.

*Disability Now* is pleased to offer you the opportunity to win one of 10 copies of *The Daughters of Cain* by Colin Dexter, an Inspector Morse mystery and *Murder on the Orient Express* by the Queen of Crime, Agatha Christie.

*The Daughters of Cain* is read by Kevin Whately who plays the long suffering Sergeant Lewis in the popular TV series Inspector Morse.

Agatha Christie's classic crime novel featuring the fiendishly clever Belgian detective, Hercule Poirot, *Murder on the Orient Express* is brilliantly brought to life by Andrew Sachs, who is best known for his role as Manuel in Fawlty Towers.

Come rain or shine, the twists and turns of these classic whodunnits will keep you entertained at home or abroad. For the chance to win, complete the coupon and return it to our FREEPOST address. For more information about Macmillan Audio Books, call 020 7014 6041 or visit [www.panmacmillan.com](http://www.panmacmillan.com)

Agatha Christie

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS



# ELECTRIC DREAM

At DN, we're always on the look out for new and exciting arrivals on the mobility market. Now here's news of the latest 'buzz word' in the disability field and your chance to win one of the most versatile mobility products on the UK market priced only at £995.

Hot on the heels of its official launch at the Donington Mobility Roadshow, we were lucky enough to get our hands on the TGA Buzz, and for the next four weeks it'll be up for grabs! Retailing at £995, Buzz is likely to be the least expensive mobility product on the UK market. Unlike other products, the vehicle is designed to appeal to people of all ages. This electric-powered machine is a scooter and a power chair all in one and can be used around the home, in the workplace and even over rough terrain. Unlike other scooters, Buzz has no armrests, so it will fit as neatly under your desk at work or college as it will in the boot of your car. Not only is it compact, practical and fun to drive, its no-fuss hand levers make it very easy to operate. Simply push down on the levers at either side of the seat and the motor will power you along at speeds of up to 4mph. Should you need a break from steering on those extended journeys, make use of Buzz's attachable handles

which your friend can fit to the rear of the chair and control. (Buzz's battery pack will take you up to 12 miles on a single charge.)

For the chance to win a Buzz, complete the coupon (above right) and return via our FREEPOST address as shown.

TGA Electric Leisure are delighted to bring Buzz to the UK. For further information and to arrange an appointment for a test-drive, visit their website [www.tga-electirc.com](http://www.tga-electirc.com) or telephone on 01787 478430.



**to enter** Tick the competition circle below, add your details, and send FOR FREE to *Disability Now*, Freepost WD4323, London N7 9BR, or you can fax it on 020 7619 7331, or e-mail the details to: [editor@disabilitynow.org.uk](mailto:editor@disabilitynow.org.uk)

☐ TGA ☐ Dexter ☐ Christie



## terms & conditions

• Closing date for offers: 30.08.2002 • Entrants must be over 18 • No proof of purchase required • UK entrants only • No cash alternatives • Winners

notified by post • Editor's decision is final • Special offers not open to DN staff or associates • Winners may be announced in *DN* • In association with TGA Electric Leisure and Macmillan Audio Books, and we may use your name and address for further marketing purposes. Please tick the box if you do not wish your details to be included ☐

## DN next month



Back to school: Children at the Scope Liverpool Early Years Centre.

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